

# INTERNEED IN GERMANY

H.C. MAHONEY

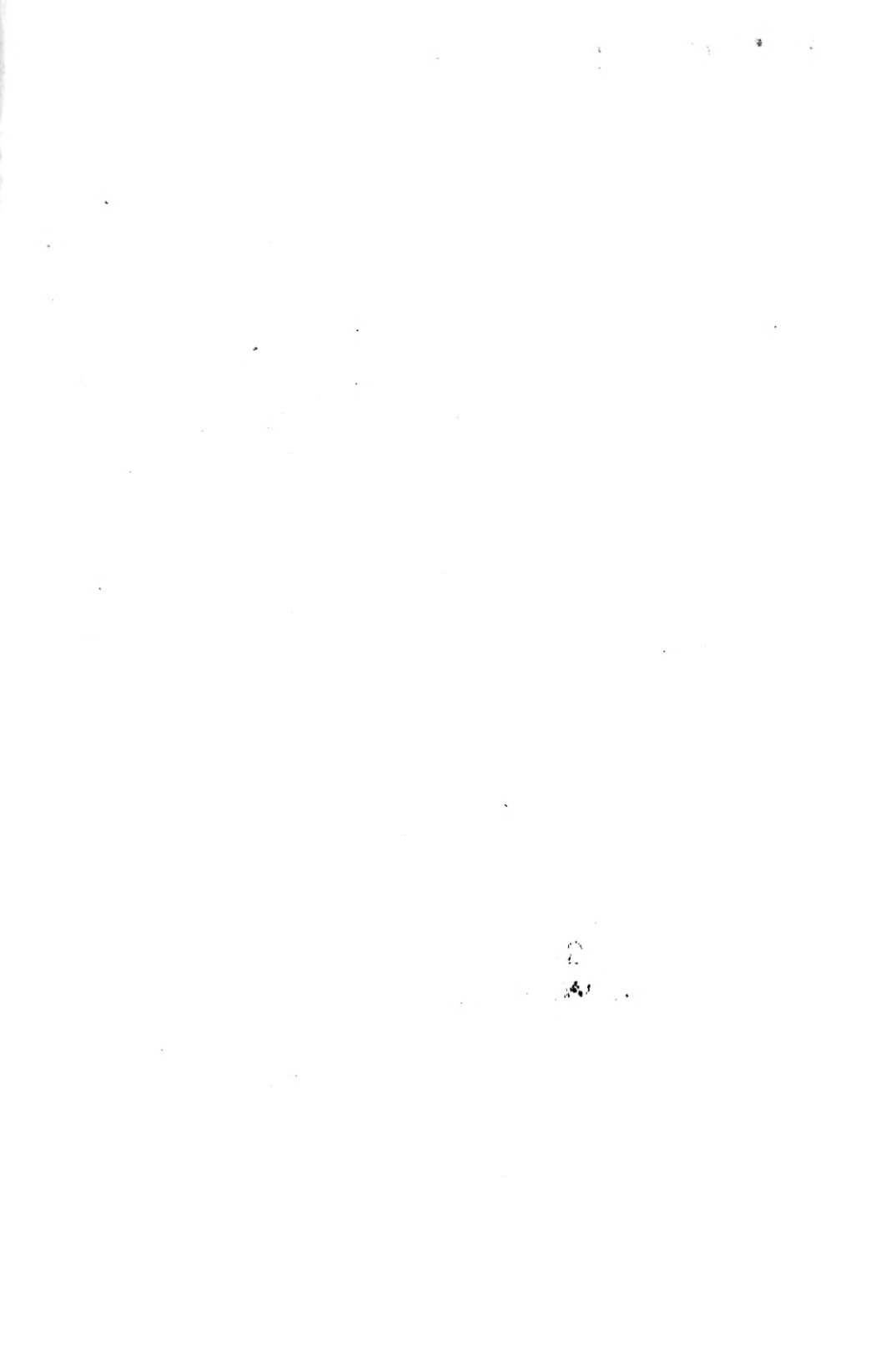
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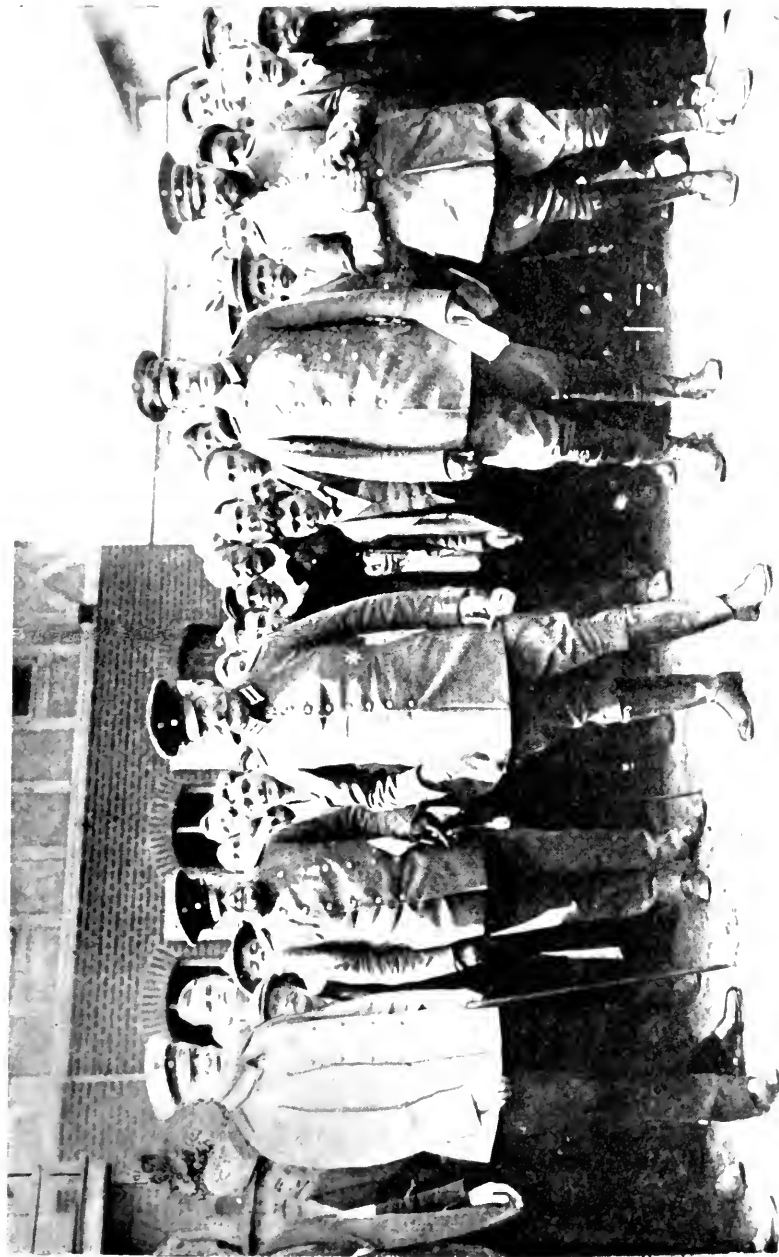




INTERNED IN GERMANY.







GERMAN OFFICERS OF RUTHLEBEN CAMP.

Reading from left to right: Graf. Scherlin, the Chief; Chief Censor, who was a favorite amongst the prisoners owing to his love of fair play; Baron von Taube, in charge of Affairs (known as "Baron von Two Face"); the remaining two being Members of the Censor Department.

# INTERNEDED IN GERMANY

BY

HENRY C. MAHONEY

AUTHOR OF

"SIXTEEN MONTHS IN FOUR GERMAN PRISONS"



NEW YORK

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1918

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## *PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD.*

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**T**HERE was published a year ago "Sixteen Months in Four German Prisons" to which this volume is a sequel, being an account of the months spent by the author in the Ruhleben Internment Camp. Mr. Mahoney was passing through Germany on his way to Russia, when war broke out. He was arrested and with others sent to Wesel Prison, where he was tried secretly as a spy and though not found guilty he was never acquitted, but sent first to one prison camp and then another, becoming acquainted with Sennelager, Klingelputz, and finally Ruhleben, where he spent the last twelve months of his imprisonment, and whence he finally made good his escape.

One of the points of especial interest of which little has been heard in this country is an account of a violent split among the

English prisoners, there being a group of several hundred who were pro-German in their sympathies. The details are scarcely believable to us—even now when one is called on every day to believe the incredible.

The conditions in German camps are now of vital interest to the American people. Very little accurate information has heretofore been obtainable. Mr. Mahoney's book is an unusual contribution to this information and to the literature of the war.

## CHAPTER I.

### *THE ROUND-UP OF THE BRITISH ELEMENT*

I was kicking my heels disconsolately in the city of Cologne, an alien "on pass" in an enemy country. Alarmed at the serious condition of my health, which had been undermined by privation and confinement, the German government had released me from the internment camp at Sennelager after an enforced stay of several weeks. The authorities had offered me freedom within the country on parole, but as I emphatically declined—preferring the possibility of escape to England—they gave me merely a permit, good within the Cathedral city beside the Rhine, and its suburbs.

I sought employment without success; the Britisher was at a serious discount in the labor market at that time. Had it not been for the practical sympathy of a compatriot

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and friend, Walter K——, whom I had first met in Sennelager, I really think I should have petitioned the Teuton authorities for my return to prison, and if they had refused, should have committed some penal offense to obtain the protection, such as it was, of a German civil prison.

K—— was one of those true friends whom one finds when in trouble. He had lived in Cologne for many years and was well established in commercial circles, hence he had suffered only a brief detention at Sennelager. Upon his release he returned to his old business, and the day we parted at the Sennelager camp gates, he told me if I should ever be in his city to look him up and spend a few days with him. I took advantage of this invitation and visited him at his country home in a tiny, picturesque village overlooking the Rhine.

My first anxiety on regaining restricted freedom was for my wife at home. I had left her, three months before, in a delicate state of health, and during the period of my imprisonment had not heard a word about her, nor had she heard from or about me.

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One circumstance worried me especially. I had been told that a German newspaper had narrated my death, "shot as a spy," after my military trial at Wesel of which I have already written in my book, "Sixteen Months in Four German Prisons." I hoped against hope that this ghastly report had not reached her.

I made several attempts to get a letter through, telling her of my whereabouts and experiences, but the German authorities put their foot down firmly upon the interchange of correspondence. I resorted to various subterfuges, but as I subsequently learned, none of these attempts was successful; either the letters went astray or, as is more probable, were officially intercepted and destroyed.

During this period, my friend and I were greatly perturbed by the attitude of the German newspapers, which advocated the rounding-up of all British subjects in Germany. All of them called vehemently for drastic action, pointing out that the internment camp established at Ruhleben was the very place for those of us who were "on

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pass." The press went on to describe the amenities of the camp, dwelling at length upon the conveniences, comforts and amusements provided for its inmates. Evidently the bright colors were laid too thickly upon the picture painted, for a volume of correspondence poured forth from irate patriots protesting against the pampering of enemy aliens and suggesting that we all be put to some useful work and made to realize that we were prisoners, not guests, of the German nation.

The outlook was certainly forbidding. Both K—— and myself confidently anticipated arrest at any moment. The climax came one evening. Two other compatriots, also released "on pass," visited K—— at his home, although their permit was only for Cologne. In the village there was an important factory managed by three Englishmen, and the fact that seven Englishmen planted themselves in this tiny, remote village prompted the burgomeister, who knew K—— intimately, to inquire half jestingly if he were contemplating the foundation of an English colony on the spot.



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Upon the evening in question, these two friends came over. I had tickets for the opera, and accordingly left my three compatriots playing cards and exchanging experiences. Coming out of the theatre at the end of the performance, my attention was caught by a newspaper placard announcing the intention of the authorities to intern all Britons at once.

When I reached K——'s house I greeted them gaily with "Cheer up, boys! We're all going to be clinked to-morrow!"

Animated discussion followed my account of the placard announcement. The two guests were in a quandary. According to regulations they were compelled to report themselves every day to the authorities in Cologne, because their passes confined them to that city. They were out of bounds at K——'s home. The hour was late and they were afraid of being caught beyond the limits of their permit, in which event, needless to say, Teuton system would have exacted punishment. But it was impossible for them to get back to the city that evening, so they spent the night with us.

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They left us at an early hour next morning and went directly to the authorities to conform with the regulation. The official in charge curtly ordered them to return home, pack their belongings and report again in half an hour. They seized this brief respite to telephone a warning to us.

K—— at once hustled off to the city to wind up his business and then returned to await the inevitable. During the morning I packed my few belongings, not forgetting the voluminous notes relating to my experiences in previous German prisons prepared during my leisure, and which I highly treasured.

The blow fell that afternoon. Two detectives from Cologne were announced. They stated that we were both under arrest. From the tenor of the conversation, K—— concluded that the round-up was merely a matter of form, and that we should be released as soon as we conformed with some new regulation or other which had been promulgated. I admired his optimism, but inwardly held a contrary opinion. I had occasion to view Teuton methods in a vastly

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different light, and did not regard the outlook with any degree of confidence.

Our arrest had a light side that contrasted strangely with steel-bound German method and system. Both detectives knew K—— very well, and suggested—after a drink—that we should proceed to police headquarters as unobtrusively as possible. It was first necessary to report to the local burgo-meister, and the detectives expressed their readiness to meet us there by appointment, they in the meantime changing from their conspicuous official uniforms into mufti.

The appointment was fixed for 6:30. K—— and I, our bags packed with eatables, presented ourselves well before time, to find that the three Britishers employed in the local factory had been corralled and similarly treated. The local formalities completed, we trooped merrily off to the city, captors and captives joking as if the best of friends. We stopped at a restaurant for a farewell dinner, and the detectives obligingly slipped to another table so as to disarm all suspicion. After dinner we resumed our journey, a festive party until we turned the corner leading

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to the prison whither we were bound. Directly the building loomed in sight our detectives resumed their mask of officialdom, and with rough tongues and brusque manner hustled us into the presence of Teuton authority.

We were at once passed on to the cells, where we were told we should have to make ourselves content until our papers came through from the military authorities. We continued to make light of the experience, and K—— stoutly maintained that in a few hours we should be free to roam Cologne again. But his optimism proved without foundation. We did not regain our permits for restricted freedom, but instead an unsolicited and unappreciated “pass” to *Ruhleben*.

Although German method and organization have been paraded before the world *ad nauseum*, and for the most part have been proved as empty as the proverbial wind-bag, yet there are one or two characteristics of Prussianism which cannot fail to command attention. The German Government never does things by halves, does not waste its time

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in idle threats, and although it frequently makes mistakes, the errors always work to the advantage of authority. When Teuton officialdom says a thing is to be done, it is done, and without the slightest delay. The celerity and completeness with which the British element, resident in, and travelling through, the country, was rounded up after the fiat went forth, bore this out very conclusively.

Within twelve hours of the publication of the decree every Britisher—except one—was safely placed under lock and key.

It was the comprehensiveness of the round-up which created the greatest measure of astonishment. The authorities were as indiscriminate as they were thorough. The tourist was taken with the man who had been settled in the country for ten, twenty, forty years; the millionaire was taken with the pauper; the bank manager with the commercial traveler; the magnate of business with his junior clerk. The governing principle was "Arrest them all; sort them out afterwards."

The round-up was marked by several pa-

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thetic incidents. Many men, established in business, upon reading the notice to report themselves on November 6th, anticipated being granted permission to proceed to their offices as usual. But they were disappointed. Directly they had been identified and docketed they were clapped into prison. They were not even given half an hour's grace to bid farewell to their families; were not permitted to communicate with their homes by letter or telephone; and possessed nothing beyond what they had with them. The distress created by this merciless method of arrest was far-reaching. Wives and children suddenly lost husband or father, and did not learn the truth for several days.

When we reached the prison we found, in a pitiable state of distress, one man who had been arrested in this unceremonious manner. He had rushed away from a sick wife to comply with the order, only to be put under lock and key. He pleaded hard for permission to return and say good-bye, but his appeal fell upon deaf ears.

Another Englishman who answered the call was imprisoned in the same hasty way,

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and had not a penny in his pocket. One fellow was particularly down-hearted. He had been established in Germany for many years, and had a prosperous business into which he had put all of his savings. His partner was a German; the authorities had dragged him off for military service, imprisoned the Englishman and commandeered the entire stock in the business.

Even more pathetic was the case of another Englishman, a widower, who promptly answered the summons to report. He was condemned to the cells the minute his identity was established. With tears in his eyes he explained that he had come in haste, leaving his two young children alone at home. Like everyone else, he had expected to be able to return home after complying with the regulation. He pleaded for permission to complete arrangements for his children's guardianship, but the authorities would not listen to him. He was not even allowed to communicate with his home. His mental condition can be better imagined than described.

Upon our transference to prison, our orig-

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inal party managed to keep together, K——, the three British managers from the factory, and myself. While we were in Klingelputz, which was temporarily overcrowded, I was able to take stock of the permanent residents of this penitentiary, and they were the worst set of ruffians I have ever laid eyes upon, a large number of them serving long terms of penal servitude.

One prisoner, as he walked the exercise yard, which our cells overlooked, aroused my special attention. He was garbed in the uniform of the Red Cross, and for some time I puzzled my brains as to his inclusion among the "lifers" in such a dress. The gaolers told us that he was colloquially known as "Old Fingers." What crime had he committed? Oh, he had been caught on the battlefield, not succoring the wounded as his duty ordained, but robbing the dead and dying. He had a *penchant* for rings, and in his greedy haste was unable to purloin them in a reasonably humane manner, but cut off the fingers instead. He was caught in the act, and his pockets found filled with dismembered fingers covered with rings. He was



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sentenced to fifteen years penal servitude, and compelled to parade the exercise ground in the Red Cross uniform that he had so abused, as a terrifying example.

This wholesale round-up of Britishers speedily provoked complaint from affected German interests. The German who owned the factory managed by my friends, went to the authorities and declared that he would have to close his establishment unless his three British employees were released. My three compatriots were highly amused at his discomfiture, personally caring little whether he had to close down or not. He continued to appeal pleadingly for their release; and finally, as the three men concerned concluded that the pure air of the outer world was preferable to the oppressive atmosphere of our cell, their release was discussed. But they would not go out alone; K—— was just as respected a citizen of Cologne as themselves, and K—— in turn declared that I would have to come, too, and offered to be responsible for my good behavior.

This wholesale request rather staggered the authorities, but there was no other way

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out, and things began to look brighter for us. Finally we were called and informed that we were to be allowed our freedom "on pass" as before. Two officers stepped forward to escort us to the *Polizie Prasidium*, the local equivalent of Scotland Yard, where we were to receive our papers.

It was an exciting trip from one building to the other. We had to walk through the crowded market-place, and as soon as we were seen, the cry went up, "*Schweine-hund Englander*" and we were greeted with hisses and catcalls. Our guardians closed around and kept the yelping crowd at bay. Balked in their efforts, the mob opened a lively fusillade with a variety of missiles. Potatoes, rotten apples and other vegetable refuse rained upon our heads. If we had not been under escort, we should certainly have been roughly handled.

When we reached the *Prasidium* another delay arose. Our papers had come from Coblenz, the administrative military center, by a route which was not in accordance with official regulations, and we were put into cells to wait until they had been redispached

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and received through the correct military channel. As it would be several days before they could be received, we realized that our case was hopeless. We could not escape internment. Within a couple of hours the prison van drove up, and we were taken back to Kingelputz, to await transference to Ruhleben.

At half past four the next morning we were aroused and told to dress quickly—no easy matter, as our cell was lighted only by a single oil lamp. We were paraded, counted and recounted, until our heads began to whirl. Then, no man missing, we were lined up with what belongings we had, and under a strong armed escort, marched to the station. Although it was early in the morning, crowds had turned out to gaze upon the unusual spectacle of several hundred British civilian prisoners being marched off in custody. It was a listless crowd; the people looked at us sullenly but made no manifestation of hostility. We turned into the station about eight o'clock, and were bundled straightway into the train, to make ourselves as comfortable as we could, a rather

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difficult task as the carriages were devoid of all heating apparatus, although it was a typical raw, depressing November morning. After an hour's wait the train started on its long pull to Ruhleben, via Hanover, and I do not think that trip will ever be forgotten by any of the luckless Britishers who were aboard.

As was always the case when prisoners were forced to make a railway journey, no food or even water was provided *en route*. German organization does not take the commissariat into consideration under such conditions. Those of us who observed the precaution to stock our bags and pockets with provender fared well enough; but there were many who had no reserves at all. The wise shared their stocks with the foolish as far as possible, but there was scarcely sufficient to go round. One or two of our guards, out of sympathy, also divided their humble supplies with the prisoners, but for the most part our escort ignored us. When we stopped at a station, those who had money and were prepared to patronize the restaurant, found that no food was sold to prisoners.

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It is not surprising that one or two of the party fainted from hunger and the stifling atmosphere of the crowded carriages, but they received no attention. At one station a man in distress persuaded his guard to make some purchase for him. As the guard was returning he was accosted by an officer, who on learning the destination of the edibles, promptly threw them on the ground and kicked them hither and thither.

Before we reached Hanover one of the party collapsed. The train drew up at the station platform, and seeing a party of German women wearing the uniform of the Red Cross we approached them and offered a mark—one shilling—for a basin of water with which to revive our comrade. When these young women learned that the water was only required for a "*Schweine-hund Engländer*," they emptied the basin on to the platform, spat in the man's face and turned on their heels. But they kept the money, doubtless as a contribution to the German Red Cross Fund.

At nine-thirty the train resumed its tedious journey. About six o'clock the next

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morning we reached the much vaunted Camp of Promise. It was damp, cold and dark. Our arrival had evidently been expected, for as we approached the internment camp we observed a large crowd of the prisoners already in occupation gathered around the entrance. They gave a lusty cheer when they caught sight of us and pressed forward eagerly. Half a dozen bayonets flashed angrily and beat them back.

As we filed into the camp, the inquiry went up:

"Hello, boys! Where are you from?"

"Klingelputz," we called in reply.

"How long were you there?"

"Only a few days! Who are you?"

"The 'K. G.'s' "

The answer came in a unanimous roar uttered with such vehemence as to startle our guards.

"The 'K. G.'s?' " we repeated puzzled.  
"What's that?"

"The Kaiser's Guests! Come along. You'll soon understand."

In extending their vociferous welcome to us each raised his tin bowl over his head, and

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as we drew closer we saw inscribed on the side of each bowl, according to official instructions, the two letters "K. G." I never fathomed their true significance, but the prisoners solved the problem to their own satisfaction. Every man in Ruhleben was facetiously identified as the "Kaiser's Guest."

## CHAPTER II.

### *THE HOME OF THE "K. G.'S"*

On that raw, marrow-chilling November morning, our new home did not appear especially inviting, nor did the day seem a happy augury for our future welfare. We stamped our feet in the slush, and swung our arms vigorously in desperate efforts to beat some warmth into our quivering bodies. Then an Englishman, the Captain of the Camp, strode up and piloted us to the quarters that were to be our home for so many dreary months.

And what quarters! It is difficult to give a convincing picture of the camp site, but one might compare the racecourse at Epsom with that at Ruhleben. The latter is every whit as exposed and certainly quite as dreary. Upon the occasion of a big race meeting, when the course was flanked with throngs of gaily attired fashionables, and



the weather was warm and sunny, it did, no doubt, present an animated and inviting aspect. But in the dawn of that drab November morning it was about as attractive as a muck heap.

The internment camp was not spread over the entire course. At that time the British prisoners were penned into a small corner—the paddock—with the grandstand, shorn of all its festiveness, thrown in as a kind of make-weight. The racecourse and trotting track were railed off. As we surveyed the low rambling buildings we wondered where our living quarters were installed; conceive our amazement when we learned that we were expected to make ourselves at home in the buildings that had been erected to accommodate the horses and their provender—in other words, the small horse boxes and the hay lofts!

The sight of the depressing surroundings strengthened our (K——, the other two who had been arrested with us and myself) resolve to remain together if possible. Possibly we should be able to extract a measure of comfort from our own company, and the

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fact that K—— spoke German fluently was a distinct advantage.

Reaching Barrack 5, which was assigned to us, we moved into one of the vacant horse boxes. It reeked with the pungent aroma incidental to a stable, and fresh manure was still clinging to the walls—we heard that its legitimate owner had only been withdrawn a short time previously—but we unanimously voted it to be preferable to the confined space overhead. We threw down our belongings and were about to make ourselves comfortable when another party of prisoners bustled up and deposited their baggage explaining that this particular horse box had been assigned to them.

Our jaws dropped. We cleared out with the best grace we could muster, made inquiries, and learned that prisoners flush of funds benefited at the expense of their poorer brethren. The sites were sold as if they were freeholds, and we discovered that in some instances as much as £5 had been paid for a horse box. This sale of living quarters created intense discontent, especially when we learned that the transactions

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represented a good round sum all told. Also we had a very shrewd suspicion as to who profited by the practice. This is one of the issues that the more aggressive prisoners took up in grim earnest, and at a later date when things had been straightened out, such penalizing of the less fortunate prisoners was sternly suppressed. But in the early days such methods were common.

Ejected from the horse box we wound our way up a creaking ramshackle staircase which threatened to give way under our weight. We blundered through the narrow door and then pulled up dead. The interior was as black and forbidding as a coal hole. It was some minutes before our eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, and then we descried upon the floor a seething, misshapen mass of humanity, tumbling and jostling restlessly for elbow room in which to settle down.

The loft was some 70 yards long by 9 yards wide, and divided into two sections. The roof sloped sharply, bringing the space between the floor and the rafters to between 3 feet, 6 inches, and 4 feet, 6 inches at the

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walls, while in the center it was about 7 feet. Down the middle of the space ran a gangway 4 feet wide. The beds, or rather the spaces allotted for sleeping, were set transversely on either side of the gangway, two feet to a man, with head against the wall. The result was that each occupant had to crawl into the central gangway to dress and undress because he dared not rise in his bed unless he wished to crack his head against the roof.

There was no ventilation whatever; air struggled through holes in the roof and cracks in the walls, but as the draughts caused one's hair to stand on end these interstices were promptly chinked with paper. The floor was of stone and at that time of the year as cold as ice. No heating apparatus had been installed; this came later upon the urgent recommendation of the American Ambassador.

We strove to force our way into the loft but had to give it up. The prisoners already in possession were huddled together in a vain attempt to profit by the warmth radiated from one another's bodies. All were spent

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from the twenty hours' trip in the train, and they had discarded their baggage pell-mell; to move was to invite a vicious kick from one who had been trampled on, or collision with a rafter. We cast around and found only one eligible spot "to let," capable of receiving four men. This we squatted upon, but soon discovered why these few feet of space had failed to claim an owner. They were too near the door and the wind whistled through with the ferocity of a tornado.

After we had finally secured our quarters we were commanded to fetch an armful of straw and scatter it loosely upon the floor. This was our couch. The quantity served out was so meager as to offer no comfort when reclining, while it was not of sufficient thickness to prevent the cold from the stone striking through to our bodies. Later, when the American Ambassador inspected our quarters and detected the rudeness of our shake-down we were given boards, placed an inch or two above the floor, to serve as beds; but until then, we had to make ourselves as comfortable as we could by snuggling down into the straw like pigs in a sty and packing

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closely together for warmth. Even then, we dared not remove our garments, and, in my case, three months elapsed before I shed my clothes for a night's rest.

How we passed the first night it is impossible to relate. The inky blackness of the loft prevented one from moving, once he had secured his quarters. The silence of the night was broken by the groans, mumblings and sobbings of the distraught prisoners, dreaming of home or lying awake, too cold to sleep, and ruminating on their unfortunate plight. Owing to the absence of ventilation and the cramped quarters—400 of us stowed within this confined space—the condition of the atmosphere within the loft must be left to the imagination. It was stagnant and fetid to a degree that cannot be described. When we awoke in the morning our mouths were distended and as dry as tinder. When at last one did persuade the saliva to perform its functions the palate revolted. The members of the party to which I belonged dreaded the effects of the repulsive atmosphere, and our first care upon awaking was to flush our mouths with permanganate

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of potash, of which we had a small stock.

I was tossing and struggling fitfully when there came the clank of heavily shod feet. A raucous voice bawled:

“Get up! Get up!”

It was the guard. We woke and endeavored to pierce the blackness, wondering what was the matter and thinking it only midnight, but to our surprise learned that it was six o'clock, at which hour all prisoners had to tumble out.

With an effort we struggled to our feet and bestirred ourselves to perform our morning ablutions. We asked the guard for water, but that was like worrying a hitching post for information. Finally, someone alighted upon two taps in the alleyway between the horse boxes downstairs. There was a mad rush towards these taps, but the struggling crowd could not all wash at once, so we formed in a long line to wait our turns. When it is remembered that 400 men desired to perform this essential operation, the formidable length of the line may be imagined, and as we were due to parade within thirty minutes, the task had to be performed very

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perfunctorily. In fact, since German system waits for nothing, parade was often called before many of the men succeeded in getting within arm's reach of the tap, and these had to dispense with washing altogether.

And what a wash for those who were successful! The water was icy, and German hygiene did not go to the extent of providing soap. It was apparently an unknown luxury. During my entire stay at Ruhleben the authorities never provided anyone with a single cake of soap. We had to buy what we wanted in this line from the canteen, and we were mulcted heavily for an article which was soap in name only. Towels were another item concerning which the Germans entertained very primitive ideas. A few coarse towels, more reminiscent of canvas than anything else, were distributed among 400 men. Fortunately, the majority of us were equipped with our own conveniences in this respect and we clung to them tenaciously.

As it was impossible for all of us to have a wash in the short period allowed between reveille and the summons to parade, the more



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enterprising tried the experiment of rising earlier. But this effort was misplaced and resulted in a commotion. The noise awoke those accommodated in the horse boxes and they voiced a vigorous protest. Ill-feeling arose and caused the authorities to intervene, with the result that no one was permitted to steal a wash before the official hour for rising—that is, unless he were so stealthy as to do it without arousing his comrades in the horse boxes.

We paraded in the chilly dawn and then were marched to the kitchen for our breakfast. In those days the Germans were apprehensive that the more daring of us might make a bold dash for liberty, and to check this they counted us at every turn. Woe be-tide us if the roll-call were incomplete because of some laggard. Then we were kept waiting in the cold while a spirited search was conducted for the missing prisoner.

We received a further shock upon this first parade to breakfast. German system revealed another shortcoming. There was an insufficient number of bowls to go round, so the guard raked out a few repulsive tins to

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remedy the deficiency. At a later date they provided us with white earthenware basins, and ordered us to take every care of them. If we broke these utensils we were fined 40 pfennigs a replacement, and were solemnly warned to surrender them before we left the camp. So far as I personally am concerned I am indebted to the German Government to the value of one basin, flung at a practical joker's head.

We formed a dejected procession slouching through the mud and slush to the kitchen, half a mile away. When we reached it we were halted and forced to wait until another barrack, already lined up, had been served. It was not until each of those 400 men had received his portion that we could approach. As only one man was served at a time as he filed by, some idea of the delay we encountered may be conceived. The facilities provided at the kitchen were totally inadequate for our needs. There were, for example, only three boilers.

As we filed by, the chef ladled us a spoonful of repulsive, black, acorn coffee without milk or sugar. That was all. We were only

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given a loaf of black bread every other day, and that had to last through six meals. The bread itself was abominable, even from the earliest days. We often discussed its composition and the number, as well as the variety, of ingredients involved in its preparation, but we never succeeded in fathoming the riddle to our satisfaction. A loaf was certainly a surprise packet.

We were not furnished with even the foregoing bread ration for long. It was reduced to about one-sixth of a loaf per man per day.

After receiving the coffee, some of the prisoners hurried back to the barrack to drink it under cover; while others braved the cutting wind and squatted upon the seats of the grandstand to drink it while still hot. This finished, we either lounged around the corners exchanging experiences and speculating upon the future, or busied ourselves in our quarters in an heroic effort to kill time.

At twelve o'clock we were again lined up, this time for our midday meal, which was served between 11:45 and 12:45. Each man proceeded with his basin tucked under his

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arm and his portion of bread clutched in one hand. We were given about twelve ounces of soup which in the early days, while certainly deficient in quality, was yet palatable. Pea soup was the favorite, garnished on rare occasions with microscopical shreds of meat and pieces of bone.

The afternoon was whiled away after the manner of the morning. Killing time in those first days constituted the most depressing feature of our existence. It was impossible to indulge in a brisk walk, as we were herded too closely together, while the surface of the ground was churned into a sea of mud and slush by 4,000 pairs of feet. Some of us finally decided to indulge in games, only to be confronted with a discouraging lack of materials. Determined to enjoy a little diversion we hunted up a few rags and some odd lengths of string, and from these contrived a primitive rag ball and let ourselves go at rounders with the ardor of schoolboys. This was the first diversion introduced into the camp and it proved a great success, becoming increasingly popular when, by some manner of

means, a prisoner succeeded in getting a rubber ball from Berlin. It was not until later that we were able to indulge in football, though we relieved the monotony of our rounders game by kicking the rag ball.

In this way we passed the afternoon until five o'clock came round. Again we had to line up to proceed to the kitchen for our evening meal. This was merely a repetition of the morning, namely, a ladleful of acorn coffee, without milk and sugar, which, with a small piece of black bread, constituted our "stayer" until the next morning. This was the menu day after day. It never varied except for an indifferent ringing of the changes upon the soup and the circumstance that, as time went on, the quantity diminished while the quality deteriorated. Not a very nourishing diet one will admit, and certainly not one designed to keep us in the best of spirits. But seeing that we were merely "*Schweinehund Engländer*" it did not matter.

I have already mentioned that our quarters were devoid of all ventilation, even during the day. We certainly kept the entrance door open as much as we dared, but it was of

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little avail, inasmuch as it was impossible to establish a circulation of air. The result was that the atmosphere within the loft became stagnant and grew more nauseating and revolting as the respirations and exhalations from the bodies of 400 men became associated with the pungent aroma arising from stale soup, which some of the prisoners harbored in their quarters and with foul stench ascending from the straw. Add to this the mud and filth brought in from outside and the wonder is that disease did not secure a foothold among us. It was only by unremitting attention upon our own part that such a calamity was averted.

The winter evenings dragged wearily. The only light permitted in the loft was a small oil lamp—in the early days not even this—which threw fitful flickerings over the gloomy cavern and cast ghostly shadows upon the roof.

At nine o'clock came the curt order, "lights out." We were forced to settle down upon the thinly covered stone floor, lying face to face and huddled closely together to keep warm. Very few could sleep until utterly ex-

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hausted. Curses, sobs and moanings about home and those who were waiting, became more and more distressing as the night went on. One dreaded the coming of darkness and when it came, longingly sighed for the dawn.

## CHAPTER III.

### *THE CITIZENS OF RUHLEBEN*

At the time I was interned at Ruhleben, the camp was under military control, and a very unpleasant condition of affairs prevailed, the soldiers asserting their authority at every opportunity. Later, supervision was transferred to civil administration, a change that brought some relief.

The responsible governor of the camp was Graf Scherein, an old soldier. So far as he personally was concerned we could lodge no complaint, for he was as sympathetic as he dared to be, and certainly did not belong to the dominant *Gott-strafe-England* party. He frequently visited us, always accompanied by a lady who was equally solicitous in regard to our welfare. I have not the slightest doubt but that he would have alleviated our condition had it been left to his



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discretion, but he was greatly hampered by official regulations. On one occasion, considering the midday dole of soup to be an outrage, I ferreted him out and showed him the liquid in support of my complaint. He tasted it and went at once to the kitchen to order that it be improved, which it was. But we could have raised a legitimate complaint every day, and so at last we grew tired of enlisting the governor's intercession on our behalf.

Graf Scherein was passionately fond of music. When we got the camp going and introduced concerts and theatrical performances he invariably came and often brought friends with him. He would listen intently, applaud and compliment us upon our efforts to lighten life in the camp.

Unfortunately for us, he was too old to pursue his task actively; and the greater part of the many and complex duties were assumed by a younger man, Baron von Taube.

Among the minor officers was the chief censor, who filled a difficult position with much success. He was always ready to do his utmost for us; and if we were in doubt

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as to whether a certain communication were advisable, he would willingly help us and stretch a point in our favor. Not that it always succeeded, for we discovered from experience that many letters which met with his approval were subsequently suppressed by some one else in Berlin. Unfortunately, his superiors resented his sympathetic attitude and finally removed him from office. Then, there was the chief of the guard, and last, but by no means least, the official doctor attached to the camp, of whom I shall have something to say in a later chapter.

Each barrack was presided over by a non-commissioned officer and a private, who were accommodated in two rooms between horse boxes on the ground floor. These men were held responsible for the conduct of each building; and owing to this under-guard being frequently changed we were kept in a condition of constant uneasiness. While some of the warders were disposed to be lenient and to wink at this or that, refraining from interfering until necessity compelled, others were martinets, watched us vigilantly and swooped down at the slightest departure

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from rules and regulations. The private was often the butt of his officer's ill humor and he promptly visited his revenge upon us. One private I shall never forget, an ignorant country yokel who could not even count.

As may be imagined, we were an extremely cosmopolitan crowd, drawn from every conceivable strata of the social scale. Only in two instances might the barracks be called homogeneous, and even in these cases there was a mixture of classes. Barrack 6 was known as the "Jews' Barrack," and Barrack 8 was tenanted for the most part by sailors taken from the British ships detained in German harbors. The remaining barracks—eleven in all with an additional teahouse, provided for our accommodation originally and their number increased later—were inhabited by a mixed assembly.

Naturally the citizens of the camp soon fell into groups according to tastes, temperament or social position. Our particular coterie was increased from four to six by the addition of two young fellows of about eighteen years of age, one from Hunstanton, the other the son of a prominent business

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man of London. Subsequently, our party became reduced to five, as one of the number became so unpopular that he was drummed out. Strange human sights may be seen in every city of the world, but I do not think any could compare with those presented during those dismal days in Ruhleben camp. We were given the use of a small stretch of ground facing the grand stand, and this speedily developed into the promenade, or, as it was facetiously styled, the "Row." Every morning, between the hours of ten and twelve, it was the place where the rank and fashion of Ruhleben might be seen in full plumage.

What a parade it was! Down-at-heel, ragged Erbert, his face concealed beneath a mangy looking accumulation of hair, rubbed elbows with d'Arcy, who was still striving desperately to create a sensation with his immaculate morning coat, corduroy trousers tied under the knee, and patent boots, rather the worse for wear but still clinging to his feet owing to a liberal use of string. Others were coatless and shuffled along on improvised clogs.

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One of our number aroused special attention. Rumor declared him a member of the British aristocracy but in the early days at Ruhleben it was difficult to deduce the standing of a man from his appearance. Internment is a mighty leveller. The cockney who had done time was hardly distinguishable from a "knot" of the first water. But there was something about this prisoner that particularly demanded respect. While he mingled freely among the others, he seemed sadly out of harmony with the strange surroundings. His clothes still preserved their Bond Street cut, and his speech and mannerisms their aristocratic flavor; but the feature that attracted the greatest measure of admiration was his monocle. He was generally admired for his personal character and sportsmanship, and although his bearing and voice were mimicked mercilessly it was with the utmost good nature and no one seemed to enjoy the banter more than himself. The few occasions when he presented himself in line at the kitchen with his basin under his arm and his black bread in one hand, his presence was the signal for good-humored

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hilarity and he was irreverently "chi-iked." But he took it all in a spirit that commanded respect and invariably retorted with a broad smile:

"D'you know, old fellah, I really don't care a tuppney damn! I think it's rippin' fun!" accentuating the drawl to enhance the effect.

He acted as though he really did enjoy the unusual experience, and this contributed to his popularity. He accepted the banter in the spirit in which it was given—namely, something out of the ordinary, indulged in to sustain our *esprit de corps*—and he was always ready to extend practical assistance to anyone in difficulty, as long as it was not noised abroad. He carefully avoided publicity and did an immense amount of good by stealth.

The sequel was rather interesting. Some months after my return from Germany I received a letter from a country seat near Newcastle in which the writer expressed his keen interest in the return of British prisoners interned in Germany, and invited me to his home to discuss the subject from a prisoners' point of view.

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I accepted the invitation. Conceive my surprise when I discovered the man so deeply interested in the welfare of our compatriots at Ruhleben—the ruling member of an old-established, north of England family—was the quondam prisoner who had provided us with so much amusement and who had always been ready to assist those in distressed circumstances. My surprise, however, can readily be explained—in the camp, names were meaningless. Sir Timothy Eden had been released some months after myself; and since his return home he has labored indefatigably in behalf of those whom he had to leave behind, and whose lot has become appreciably hardened by the straits in which the Germans find themselves as a result of the British blockade.

In the very beginning the camp divided itself into three broad groups: The Optimists, the Pessimists, and the Rumorists, the two first were constantly involved in lively arguments. The Optimists certainly regarded the situation through rose-colored glasses, and for a long time refused to believe that our detention was more than tem-

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porary. The Pessimists were every bit as emphatic that all was up; that they would never see their homes again; that they were all doomed to be shot down in the last extremity—in short, that they might just as well be dead as alive; about as welcome company as a man with measles.

But the Rumorists were the *bete noir* of the camp. A rigid censorship tends to give Mother Gossip plenty of rope in a crowded city, but never did she have such a fine time as in the camp at Ruhleben. Her chatter flew hither and thither as thickly as leaves in an autumn wind; no sooner was one story scotched than half a dozen equally wild took its place. At last things reached such a pass, that the more level-headed members of the community took the situation in hand and dealt with the worst offenders in a drastic and effective manner.

Among those who had been summarily coralled and drafted to this internment camp were one or two personalities who commanded more than passing attention. One was a London bartender, a typical cockney. He contracted the *wanderlust* while serving



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in his uneventful profession of drawing mugs of four ale down East End way, and made up his mind to see Germany or die. Thereupon investing his capital of twelve shillings in a safety bicycle and with nothing else beyond an abundance of nerve, he struck the Continent. He spent his time among the first-class hotels and evidently impressed the Teutonic Boniface fraternity with the romance of his intentions, for he was armed with a press album in which were sedulously pasted all the newspaper comments on his trip, and at each hotel he had prevailed upon the proprietor to attach his signature and the insignia of his hostelry to this album. He was traveling in high style in this inexpensive manner when war came and he arrived in due course of time at Ruhleben in company with his trusty steed, the latter the object of especial interest. Incidentally, the "twelve bob bike" provided the prisoners with a good deal of amusement, as the owner willingly hired it out for a consideration. I should imagine from the rush that ensued for the bicycle that its owner speedily recouped his original outlay. He further improved the

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shining hour by permitting all who felt so disposed to peruse his album at a penny a time.

Another individual earned the sobriquet of "Peanuts" by an outburst of enterprise. He was a darky from Sierra Leone who invested his capital in nuts and hawked them from barrack to barrack. Two other darkies who furnished the camp with infinite entertainment were Dick and Joe. One had been making a living by dubious means in Berlin and was the most unblushing liar I have ever met. His fun and love of practical joking, even when it turned against himself, rendered him a favorite.

The list of prisoners also included a well known golfer, two eminent football players, a popular athletic trainer, and an accomplished Australian violinist, whose talent whiled away many an hour and was an unfailing attraction even to the Germans.

Here and there the advantage of having a friend at court in powerful German circles was brought home to us vividly. Among the prisoners was an athletic trainer who was a protege of the King of Wurtemberg. He

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was persuaded to change his national coat and was thereupon released after a stay in camp of only a few hours. One or two other prominent members of Berlin society were similarly tempted but resolutely refused to buy freedom at such a price and accordingly are still imprisoned at the camp.

Among the 4,000 odd prisoners was a small party that aroused universal pity. It comprised two Russian women, of about thirty and thirty-five years of age, with three young children. They were the only women in the camp and they felt sadly out of place among such an overwhelming masculine population. But every man considered it his duty to mount watch and ward over these unhappy women, and they were given a small room partitioned off from the remainder of the horse boxes. The children were very young, one scarcely able to walk.

The fact that these women and two of the children had to present themselves at the kitchen along with us for their meals was a matter of deep concern to everyone. I recall one morning in particular. The ground was covered with snow and slush; the moon

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still shining brightly; the air cold and biting. As we rounded a bend in the road, we saw ahead of us silhouetted sharply against the sky, the forms of the two shivering women, two children, a hunchback and an old man with a wooden leg, trudging laboriously kitchenwards. It was such a pitiable sight that we involuntarily burst into derisive laughter and taunted the guards for interned such harmless creatures as these.

A few minutes later our merriment was abruptly and completely silenced. When the women reached the kitchen they discovered that they had forgotten a basin. Instead of the chef giving a double portion to the women to divide among the children, he curtly ordered them to go back and fetch it. The poor things were shivering with cold and the children were crying pitiaibly. The two women looked pleadingly at the chef, but they might just as well have tried to soften the Sphinx. Back they had to wearily trudge to fetch the missing basin. When they returned they were vehemently berated for tardiness and threatened with dire penalties if such a breach of regulations occurred

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again. There was not a man among us who would not have cheerfully given them his portion had he dared. Some time later they were transferred to another camp, placed we hoped, in more congenial surroundings and treated more considerately.

One note of tragedy was sounded. Shortly after my arrival, two Belgian civil prisoners were brought in, who had been arrested in a town ravaged during the German advance. Hearing that one of them could narrate a vivid tale concerning German atrocities, I ferreted him out and we had a long conversation. He told such a revolting story of rapine and bloodshed as would be difficult to parallel. Indeed, the details of the atrocities which he himself had seen and heard were so incredible that I carefully committed them to paper and suggested that he put his name to the statement. He was perfectly willing, but said that no pen could do justice to the rape, torture, mutilation and murder meted out to his compatriots by the German soldiery.

When I submitted the statement to him he ran through it and urged me to make certain

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alterations before he attached his signature as he was determined to be exact even to the most minute details. I could not undertake the revision just then, as this sort of work had to be carried on surreptitiously in the seclusion of one's quarters. To have been caught with any notes in one's possession would have meant heavy punishment. As soon, however, as I had made the alterations, I endeavored to find him again, but without success. His companion stated that his guard had suddenly turned him out of his barrack and handed him over to an imposing military escort and that they had left the camp. Where he had gone, no one knew. I was keenly disappointed at being deprived of what would have been most damning evidence of German brutalities in Belgium, but the misfortune could not be remedied, and in the course of a few days the man was forgotten.

There was a sequel however, which unnerved all of us who had listened to the Belgian's story. One morning his colleague, who was still with us, received a small parcel of comforts. While unwrapping the con-

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tents his attention was caught by a small paragraph in a fragment of newspaper, to the effect that Mrs. (the wife of our former fellow-prisoner), wished to extend her grateful thanks to the friends who had sent floral tributes in memory of her husband, killed by the Germans. The fragment containing this was torn from one of the Belgian newspapers whose hidden source of publication had not yet been discovered. The remaining Belgian, terrified at the news thus accidentally gleaned, resolutely refused to speak any further concerning the atrocities, fearing that he might share the other's fate. It was not until later we heard that the Germans, acting upon the precept that dead men tell no tales and evidently regarding this unfortunate man as dangerous, had taken him back to the town in which he had been arrested and in which he had witnessed the atrocities in question, and had there subjected him to a farcical trial that ended in his death sentence. How he was executed we never knew, but the incident was sufficiently terrifying to make us more careful concerning our conversation in the camp.

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One or two of our fellow prisoners afforded us a good deal of amusement. There was one who felt his position keenly and steadfastly refrained from making the best of things. He was rarely seen, preferring the seclusion of his barrack quarters to the society of his fellow-prisoners; and when he did venture among us, walked to and fro with his hands clasped behind him and his eyes glued to the ground. He scarcely ever ventured a word. His barrack comrades told us that he spent the day writing poetry and committing it to memory, carefully tearing the fragments of paper into tiny pieces before retiring at night, evidently in fear that their discovery upon his person might incriminate him and bring further misfortune upon his head. His comrades did not appreciate his lyrics; they were far from feeling romantic under the depressing conditions.

Whenever we had the opportunity to sing we did so with gusto. Some of the prisoners possessed excellent voices, and it was this gift which subsequently brought about the formation of glee singing, choral and other



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musical parties. In the early days we amused ourselves with improvised concerts, and when we got seriously at work the guards used to stand around us listening intently and watching with their mouths agape. It was something which they could not understand, and at times the more inquisitive would ask how it was that we could enjoy ourselves so wholeheartedly when we were languishing in prison.

This *penchant* for singing culminated in an interesting development. One day the words of a new song, set to a catchy air, were circulated about the camp. Within a very short time the air was being hummed, whistled and sung throughout the community; it spread like magic. A little later the words caught the popular fancy, the swinging chorus being particularly liked; indeed, its popularity became so great that it was roared forth upon every occasion. It only wanted one man to start it; the words would be taken up instantly by everyone within earshot, to penetrate the entire camp within a few seconds. We dubbed this air the "National Anthem of Ruhleben," and I

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do not think it will be forgotten by any one of the prisoners no matter how long he may live. The general impression prevailed that the song was a local creation, but afterwards I discovered that the music belonged to a popular music-hall ditty at home that had somehow or other found its way to Ruhleben. Then, one of the boys, considering the original words capable of improvement to meet the local situation, had promptly set to work and the following was his contribution:

Oh! We're roused up in the morning,  
When the day is gently dawning,  
    And we're put to bed before the night's  
    begun;  
And for weeks and weeks on end,  
We have never seen a friend,  
    And we've lost the job our energy has  
    won.  
Yes! We've waited in the frost  
For a parcel that got lost  
    Or a letter that the postmen never bring.  
And it isn't beer and skittles,

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Doing work on scanty victuals,  
Yet every man can still get up and sing:

### Refrain

Line up, boys, and sing the chorus;  
Shout the chorus all you can;  
We want the people there,  
To hear in Leicester Square,  
That we're the boys who never get down-  
hearted.  
Back, back, back again in England,  
Then we'll fill a flowing cup,  
And tell them clear and loud, of the Ruhle-  
ben crowd  
That always kept their pecker up.

Although our existence at Ruhleben seemed altogether aimless, and we certainly found it hard to pass the tedious hours, a certain amount of diversion was contributed from outside. Just across the Spree were the testing grounds of Spandau. The hours of daylight and darkness were punctuated by the booming of heavy cannon undergoing their exhaustive trials before dispatch to the

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battle line, while above the sonorous boom of the big guns rose the shriller and nerve-racking tat-a-tat-tat of the machine guns.

The chorus was swelled by the crash, thump, and clatter of the heavily laden munition trains that dashed ceaselessly to and fro along the railway within a stone's throw of the camp, and this thunder seriously disturbed our rest at night until we became so familiar therewith as to ignore it. Unrehearsed displays of fireworks were our evening treat. Star shells, brilliantly colored lights, and scintillating magnesium flares, also under test, rose from the cluster of drab buildings and gaunt chimneys of Spandau, lighting the vicinity with the brilliance of noonday. At times, when work at the factories was particularly brisk, these displays were truly elaborate. Although we were far from the firing line, we were able, from what we saw and heard of the preparations at Spandau, to form a vivid impression of what life must be upon the Western Front.

During the day, Zeppelins sailed over our heads, and we followed their movements with vigorous discussion as to the precise role

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they were playing in the war. Taubes, albatrosses, and aeroplanes of numerous types, also wheeled and doubled above us. We watched these war machines of the air in silence until one day one of the taubes, proving refractory, came crashing to earth. It was heartless, perhaps, and yet we could not repress our exaltation at the thought that our comrades in the battle-line would be troubled by one less enemy in the air.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH*

The apathy of the German authorities in all matters concerning our welfare never struck us so forcibly as on Sundays. While there were not many saints in the internment camp we sorely missed church upon the Sabbath. All days of the week came alike to us, and this unvarying monotony soon began to pall and affect our nerves as well as our spirits.

One evening about half a dozen of the more enterprising braved the biting wind and gathered in the dark, forbidding shadows of the grandstand, to discuss the establishment of some form of Divine Worship. One young fellow was particularly keen upon the project, maintaining that by this means we should be able to shake off our periodical fits of depression. By this time the camp had

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become sorely dejected. Freedom seemed so remote.

The proposal was accepted with avidity; and then and there the movement was started by the singing of a hymn. Some of us were doubtful as to the precise effect that such action would have, for we were beginning to think that even the Almighty had abandoned us, but we were pleasantly surprised. Fellow prisoners, ambling and lounging around, listened intently and some of them took up the air and hummed it with us.

The next service was more enthusiastically attended, and the meeting became a trifle elaborated by the inclusion of a prayer. Within a week or two this was extended into a service consisting of a couple of hymns, two or three short prayers, and a brief sermon. Those who had launched the enterprise were more than gratified at the results achieved, for each successive service attracted a larger congregation, and one could not help observing the fervor with which those who attended sang and how intently they listened. The congregation was drawn from all social ranks in the camp: horny-

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handed, weatherbeaten sailors rubbed elbows with men who had been dragged from flourishing businesses; the wilder spirits, whose cursing and invective against our pitiable conditions gave scandal to their milder brethren, were attracted by the comforting influence of even a rudely extemporized dissertation.

I doubt whether the Church was ever planted in more unpromising ground than that offered by Ruhleben camp in those days. The first service was one of the strangest I have attended. The wind swept the grandstand from end to end, causing teeth to chatter and feet to be numbed into nothingness. For the early services we were compelled to gather in the darkness, but the hymns were led by a singer whose voice would have reflected credit on any cathedral choir. Owing to the inky blackness of the night we had to depend upon our hearing faculties entirely. Yet there was something decidedly cheering about those unconventional meetings that baffles description. At first the congregation for the most part, smoked vigorously, but as time went on, they gradually refrained.



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When we first set the enterprise going we all feared that its existence would be extremely brief. So many schemes, many of brilliant promise, had been launched in rapid succession, but none had had more than a fleeting vogue. Directly a new project lost its touch of novelty it was abandoned. The Church proved the one exception to the rule and thrived and grew amazingly. Before it was many weeks old, we were able to secure the friendly glimmer of a little oil lamp, while a harmonium came into the camp from some source or other, expressly for the use of the Church.

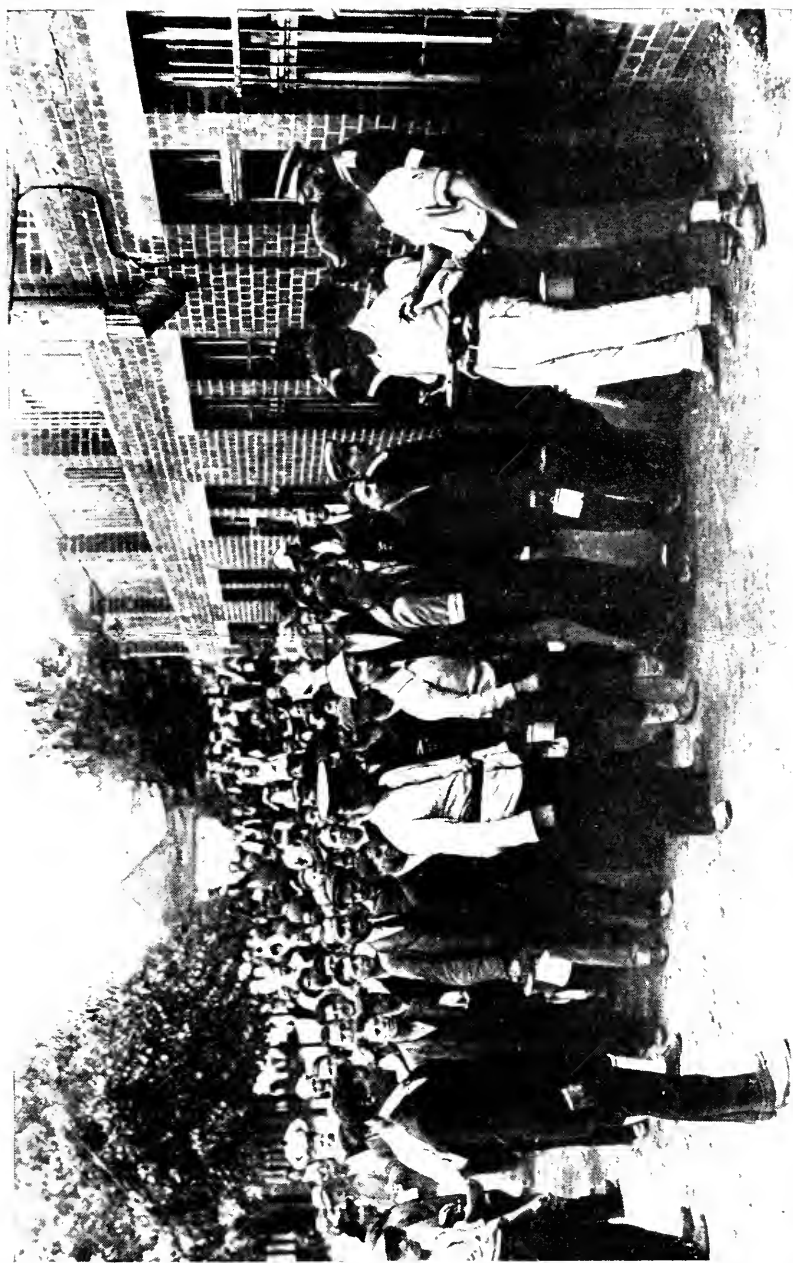
When I saw that the Church had come to stay, I wrote to my vicar at home and asked him to send us some hymnbooks, bibles and prayer books. We needed them badly for the hymns had to be written out by hand for distribution, a task not only tedious but difficult under the conditions prevailing. Still, the work was willingly performed by the enthusiasts. Even the penning of hymns upon odds and ends of paper afforded employment for otherwise idle hands. The prayers were for the most part extemporized, and this

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constituted another drawback, for memory proved a fickle reed upon which to lean. I subsequently learned that my appeal reached home and the books were sent though they never reached us. Greater success attended later efforts; my wife sent me one hundred and fifty Testaments which were distributed among the "darkies." Contributions from various sources came to hand and the Church made rapid strides.

The duties of shepherd to the flock at Ruhleben were fulfilled so far as the Church of England was concerned—this was the first sect to essay the enterprise—by one of our members. He was not ordained, but he proved an excellent leader, was a fluent speaker and generally popular. Among the prisoners was a young fellow under training for missionary work and he also gave valuable assistance.

As the gatherings grew in popularity and began to be regarded an essential factor in the life at Ruhleben—the services were held every Sunday afternoon at three o'clock—we decided to move from the uninviting grandstand to a better center, and arranged to hold



BARRACK 5 LINED UP AT THE KITCHEN WAITING FOR THEIR CABBAGE SOUP.



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our services in a large room under the stand that had been rented to serve as a theatre and concert hall. Music was furnished by a piano hired from a firm in Berlin, while we also trained an excellent choir. Once we had secured comfortable quarters we succeeded in attracting even greater numbers of the prisoners and after a short time, Sunday service became one of the indispensable features of camp life. We received a complete array of hymnbooks, prayer books, Bibles and other incidenta so that before the winter had passed we were as completely equipped, at least with all that was needful, as any Church at home.

The singing speedily became a subject of admiration in the camp, not only among the prisoners but the German military officials as well. Many possessed fine voices, and under the careful training of a few who had achieved a certain success in the musical world, solo, part and choral singing attained an established reputation. It was curious to see the crowded congregation following and taking part in the service, while outside another and equally impressive gathering, com-

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posed of the military guard and officers, was assembled to listen to the music.

It certainly was a thrilling experience to hear more than five hundred men singing with all their hearts. The favorite hymns were "Abide With Me," "At Even Ere the Sun Was Set," and another, the final line of which runs, "Give Peace, O Lord! Give Peace again!" These words were roared forth with all the enthusiasm we could muster. Occasionally, "Onward Christian Soldiers" figured in the list, but we refrained from presenting it too often, because the swinging tune was rendered so lustily that we feared the authorities might interfere, under the impression that it was some national war song, a sign of defiance to our enemies.

When those of the Church of England had demonstrated conclusively that it was possible to establish a church in the camp, other sects followed suit. The Roman Catholic Church, highly appreciative of what we had accomplished, became friendly rivals, through the initiative of an interned priest. He secured a tiny room under the grandstand which, by some means or other, he com-

pletely transformed. He built an altar and introduced many of the ritual decorations of his denomination, and aroused widespread appreciation that culminated in the presentation of a magnificent image of the Virgin. Until this priest was able to complete his own especial edifice, he often used to hold a service in our church, the two creeds thus working hand in hand.

The Father of the little church was a wonderful enthusiast, and every Catholic festival was religiously observed. Those of the Church of England did likewise, and it may seem somewhat extraordinary if not incongruous, to relate that we even celebrated "Harvest Thanksgiving," although those at home might wonder for what we could possibly render thanks unless for the mere circumstance of being alive.

After the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church the Jews also came into line, with their own building and traditional services. Their task, however, was rendered somewhat easier than that of the others, for the Rabbi of Berlin frequently visited the camp and took an active part in the work,

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receiving assistance from co-religionists scattered throughout Germany. But it is a remarkable circumstance, worthy of record, that within a few months, some four or five denominations had secured a solid and permanent foothold in the camp, and were all working harmoniously together to lighten the load of the prisoners. It is impossible to overrate the good work they accomplished. It was but a short and logical step from the regular Sunday service to the inauguration of prayer meetings, short weekday services and other applications of religious work, which not only proved of incalculable benefit and imparted a high moral tone to the prison city, but which afforded us beneficial employment, topics for conversation and reflection, and thus a greater manifestation of cheerfulness.

No mention of the work accomplished by the Church of England would be complete without a tribute to the labor of the Reverend Williams. Through an unusual burst of generosity on the part of the Teuton authorities, he was granted permission to live in Berlin and to pass from camp to camp where



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British prisoners, both civil and military, were interned. He held an extremely difficult position which he filled in a manner beyond criticism by the German authorities. It chafed us at times to think that he communicated nothing as to what was transpiring in Germany at large, but when we recalled the trying conditions under which he was discharging his self-imposed duties, and the fact that Teuton espionage was watching his every movement, ready to swoop down at the slightest suspicion, we marveled at his tact and discretion.

He used to visit the camp once a fortnight, when he would take charge of the services. Then the church would be crowded to suffocation. His sermons were totally free from cant, and appreciated because of their chatty nature. He refrained from comment on our situation, his sole idea being to cheer us up. He would drop little tidbits of information concerning the welfare of our compatriots in other camps and how they were passing their time, convey to us their good wishes and strongly urge us to keep our spirits up. At such visits we would crowd

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around him, hungry for news, but of this he could tell us little. He never ventured a word concerning the military situation, the achievements of the belligerents, or the economic state of affairs in Germany; his conversation was strictly limited to our own situation, although he never omitted to voice his sympathy for us.

No member of the cloth ever toiled harder than he, nor discharged his trying duties more efficiently. His task in Berlin was that of looking after the wives and families of the prisoners, and while he carefully refrained from acting as courier between the separated, he was able to extend the assurance that all was well without giving the slightest offense to the authorities. It was mainly through him that we learned how the prisoners in the other camps were faring. Once or twice, when the necessity arose, we made collections to provide our less fortunate compatriots with comforts, and, on one occasion, he brought us a sum of money which had been raised on our behalf among the prisoners at Doberitz camp. Many exchanges of courtesies were effected through

his untiring energy ; and it is safe to say that no man was so popular or held in such high esteem among the prisoners, irrespective of religious convictions.

Without being irreverent I may say there was a touch of pathetic even tragic humor, in connection with our services. The members of the congregation mustered with their food basins and portions of bread. Suddenly above the singing would come the tramp of feet, muffled at first but rapidly growing louder. A barrack was marching to the kitchen for its evening dole. As the procession swung by, every member took a hurried glance over his shoulder to identify the party and if a man recognized his barrack he would hastily grab his bowl and bread, dart out of the building and fall into the rear of the procession. Possibly, some devout worshippers at home may regret that we placed creature before spiritual comfort, but it must be remembered that we were receiving barely enough to keep body and soul together ; missing a meal meant going hungry for hours, and we were so penalized that even the denial of a single meal involved hardships. The

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men did not scramble hurriedly from the House of God from their own choice or inclination, but in obedience to the first law of nature, coupled with the unbending rules of Prussian organization.

On one occasion, when one of the prisoners died, we hoped that we might be privileged to extend him the final religious ceremony observed at home. But this was denied. All that the authorities would permit—in fact, commanded—was filing past the hearse containing the coffin which we mutely saluted. The burial service was held elsewhere, and only ten prisoners from Ruhleben were permitted to follow our late comrade to his last resting place. I made an effort to be included in this party but was unceremoniously refused. Evidently the authorities had gained an inkling that I was keeping my eyes and ears open, because they conveyed to me in unmistakable language, their determination and so I had to return to the barrack to nurse my disappointment.

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION*

Owing to our close confinement, lack of adequate exercise, the unsanitary condition of our quarters, the utter absence of the rudiments of hygiene, and the monotony and insufficiency of our food, it is amazing that we were not ravaged by an epidemic of some sort. Had disease in a virulent form secured the slightest foothold, it would have run through the community, as a fire rushes through a forest leaving devastation in its wake.

Germany may have accomplished wonders in the science of therapeutics, and may have produced a host of brilliant physicians, but both men and methods were sadly missing at Ruhleben. The first doctor to be officially appointed to the camp did undoubtedly show

a humanitarian interest in his charges, but this could hardly be said of his successor, Dr. Geiger.

He was a stern advocate of the Prussian system. He would visit no one. His surgery was attached to the Kommandantur's office, and here the patient, no matter how ill, had to be brought, and more than this the doctor would see no one except at the specified hours.

Dr. Geiger's medical skill soon became the subject for much distrust. A terrifying skin disorder broke out and attacked everyone indiscriminately. It was not only an unsightly but an extremely painful eruption that ravaged the face and other exposed portions of the body. Ugly, inflamed sores swelled up and some of the prisoners were horribly disfigured. To make matters worse, the camp suffered from a plague of mosquitoes during the torrid season when the malady was at its height. These insects rendered life almost intolerable. To them the rash seemed as attractive as the fly to the trout. The camp at the time was in a filthy condition; refuse—animal and vegetable—

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abounded, and was exposed to these unwelcome visitors, who attacked the garbage and ourselves in turn.

The appearance of this skin irruption and the virulence with which it spread, filled everyone with terror. We dreaded it as the precursor of the one thing we most feared, an epidemic. It must be remembered that conditions were highly favorable to its development. We were penned up like cattle with little space in which to exercise, the racecourse at this time being shut off from us by barbed wire fencing. Our sleeping quarters had deteriorated into little more than sties, despite the so-called improvements that had been carried out, mainly as a result of our continuous protest and at the instigation of the American Embassy where we lodged our complaints. We had no soap except what we bought ourselves, and as a result those who were without money, and they were many, had to do without. We were likewise without towels, and those who were so fortunate as to possess their own had to guard them carefully to prevent their disappearance or universal use. How some of the prisoners man-

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aged to keep themselves clean was more than the rest of us could understand.

For three months after our arrival we were also denied the luxury of a bath. One or two of the bolder and more hardened spirits resorted to the only alternative. They stripped, stood in the passageway and submitted to having buckets of ice cold water, drawn from the taps, thrown over them. In the middle of winter, with the mercury in the thermometer striving desparately to withdraw from sight into its bulb and the north wind whistling ferociously, this demanded no little pluck.

Finally this skin rash secured such a strong hold that we considered it time to seek medical assistance, and forthwith besieged the surgery. The estimable doctor appeared to be at his wit's end to diagnose and treat it effectively; in his opinion there appeared to be only one potential remedy—*aspirin*. This drug seemed to constitute the Alpha and Omega of his medical knowledge for he enlisted its assistance for all of the ills to which the flesh is heir. I have been in the surgery and seen a man come tottering in,



almost delirious with fever. A tablet of aspirin was all he received. Another comrade came along suffering from acute diarrhoea. Aspirin was again dealt out. A third limped in with a sprained foot; and he, too, was treated with aspirin. At home we laugh at the widely advertised medicines that are blazoned as a cure for all ills, but British faith in these articles is as nothing compared with the Germans' belief in the curative properties of the coal-tar derivative, for the aspirin treatment, which became one of the jokes of Ruhleben, was by no means peculiar to this camp. In each of the four prisons with which I made an intimate acquaintance, aspirin appeared to be the sovereign remedy.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that we came to regard the qualifications of the doctor for his responsible post with considerable misgiving, and we hated to entrust ourselves to the aspirin quack. What measure of relief we received came from an unexpected quarter—one of the prisoners, who must have studied medicine very thoroughly. When we discovered his ability we

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placed ourselves in his hands and trusted him implicitly.

This accomplished comrade was untiring in his efforts although he had to pursue his practice in secret. The prisoners flocked to him, or he had to visit them if they were too ill. The task was one of extreme difficulty as he had to work without arousing the faintest suspicion. It was only the cases he considered too serious for secret treatment that were referred to the official doctor. But a man had to be prostrated with a dangerous malady before he would consent to call in other aid. The result was that our compatriot found himself in constant demand at all hours of the day and night.

Evidently our official representative got wind of what was taking place and his professional jealousy was aroused; but he either lacked courage to expose the other or he was not quite sure of his information, for nothing was said by the authorities who refrained from interfering any more than was necessary. The less work they were occasioned on behalf of the prisoners the better from their point of view. They would never

seek trouble, so that the official, had he lodged his complaint, would probably have met with little sympathy.

An interview with this official doctor was always amusing. When a patient presented himself at the surgery he was curtly requested to narrate the symptoms of his disorder, the doctor meantime regarding him with suspicious eyes. When the patient had finished, the doctor would burst out in a kind of shriek:

“Malingerer!”

This was one of the few English words he knew, and he used to delight in enunciating it with the rat-a-tat-tat of a machine gun, dwelling at length upon each syllable. He never believed a prisoner. To him we were always shamming. But his use of this word caused one real tragedy. A prisoner was suffering from an advanced heart complaint, and one day, feeling particularly ill, he presented himself to the doctor. When the patient had concluded his case, out came the inevitable word. The man, stung to the quick by the false accusation, became excited, and flew into a fearful rage, which,

however, only served to convince the doctor of the correctness of his deductions. The patient stamped off to his barrack in high dudgeon. A few hours later he was found dead; he had succumbed to his affliction.

On another occasion one of our number fell ill, and even our unpractised eyes could see that he was being tortured by a raging fever. One or two of us went down to the surgery to report and we urged the doctor to visit the sufferer. But he would not hear of it. His surgery was provided for receiving patients, and unless they presented themselves there they could not expect to receive the fruits of his knowledge and skill. We protested vehemently that the man was unable to walk, but to no avail. Retracing our steps we got our comrade out of his bed, wrapped him up as warmly as we could, since the weather was bitter, and assisted him to the surgery. But that journey nearly proved his undoing. Upon his return he was prostrated. He rapidly grew worse, and it was only through our unremitting attention that he pulled through. Throughout the whole of his severe illness the medical attendant

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never exhibited the slightest trace of interest or humane feeling in this man.

One young British jockey went under merely because the doctor refused him the attention of which he was in dire need. The death of this fellow forced a wave of deep indignation throughout the camp, for the general opinion was that he would have lived had he been properly treated. The authorities strove to assuage the outburst of popular feeling without success. To this day the prisoners emphatically declare that the young jockey was a victim of the Prussian system in its most oppressive and brutal form which, in plain English, may be described as nothing short of gross neglect and absolute indifference as to whether he recovered or not.

Our official medical attendant sometimes displayed signs of initiative and enterprise that created widespread amusement. One of these remarkable brain waves struck him one morning during the prevalence of the skin disease, when the rapid increase in the number of patients had begun to cause alarm. After he had surveyed a score of us he

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jumped excitedly to his feet, prancing like a two-year-old, and rubbing his hands gleefully at his brilliant inspiration. We surveyed him wonderingly, until turning to us, he ejaculated:

"I know what is the matter with you. You are too lazy. You don't bestir yourselves. You want exercise. Do you understand? Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!! And you are going to get it."

As we had been fretting for weeks for the opportunity to give our legs a good stretch we failed to see any novelty in his diagnosis. Confinement, as we all knew, had been chiefly responsible for the scourge that had visited us. No one can conceive the wistfulness with which we used to look through the chinks in the gate upon the broad expanse of the trotting and racing track from which we were shut off. We would have given anything to have taken a sharp walk or sprint around its circuit. Now we were to have our ardent desire gratified as part and parcel of our medical treatment.

The doctor was so jubilant over his discovery of the cause of the malady that he was

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impatient to apply the remedy and resolved to set the ponderous Prussian machinery moving without loss of time. We were paraded, and the entire band of 4,000 prisoners were ushered through the gate for a brisk walk around the track, under a strong guard, needless to say. But this very walk revealed the incompetence of our medical guardian in a telling manner, for we were of all ages and physical conditions, some sick, others in full health, and yet we were all commanded to walk at the same gait and the guards set the pace. Those of our number who were young and healthy had no difficulty in maintaining the official military stride, and were able to keep it up for the prescribed quarter of an hour without feeling any fatigue; but those who had passed the prime of life, and who were stiff of limb, as well as those in poor physical condition, could not manage more than a moderate gait, and then could keep it up for only short intervals.

Consequently, the exercise developed into nothing but a farcical episode which those of us who were fit enjoyed hugely. The older men and those in indifferent health, dropped

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out one after the other. The procession which started out so bravely, with the compactness of a battalion of fighting men, became attenuated into a long-drawn-out, straggling line. It was impossible to slow down the pace to that of the slowest man, since then the younger and more agile members of the party failed to keep themselves warm and all benefit arising from the exercise was lost.

Dr. Geiger finally grasped the situation, and, probably at the urging of the officers who understood the matter far better than he did, the 4,000 men were divided into two companies: the first composed of the brisker-walking members, and the second of those who could only muster a moderate pace. But even then the result was no better than when we were mustered together. The only obvious solution was to divide the prisoners into a number of small groups, each of common walking ability, but this scheme was too complicated for the guards, and the doctor's enthusiasm underwent a heavy dampening. Within a few days, the walk deteriorated into a go-as-you-please, as-long-as-you-please,



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when-you-please display of pedestrianism that was anything but impressive to the Prussian guards who were accustomed to seeing everything proceed with the precision of clockwork. Within a month the daily exercise was abandoned as a complete failure, much to our disappointment, for we had enjoyed the walk keenly. But this abandonment was characteristic of German methods. Few proposals suddenly conceived upon our behalf and enthusiastically ushered in, proved more than the proverbial nine days' wonder.

Within easy distance of Ruhleben and forming part of the medical administration, though independently controlled, was the sanatorium to which certain cases, after a prolonged diagnosis, were transferred from the camp. Prisoners who were compelled to accept its treatment had to pay their own expenses, and needless to say, we were fined heavily. While some of the prisoners declared that little fault could be found with this home, under the circumstances,—they were careful to explain this qualification—others condemned it unequivocally. I made

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up my mind to keep out of it at all hazards and succeeded, so I cannot say anything based upon personal experience as to the treatment, but the most emphatic complaint was the expense of the treatment within its walls.

There was one subsidiary establishment that was regarded askance by every man in the camp. This was the lazaret. Male orderlies attended to the patients, while a prisoner was appointed to serve as general attendant. Many dark stories concerning this hospital were circulated, and it certainly gained a far from savory reputation.

While some of the stories were unmistakably exaggerated, others were founded on solid fact. I can testify to the latter from personal investigations. I learned that on one occasion the establishment ran out of surgical dressings and had nothing with which to tend injured prisoners. They surmounted the difficulty, from what I discovered, by using discarded dressings.

This utilization of second-hand dressings, which should never have escaped the fire, provoked a feeling of horror; but there was

no alternative. Every dressing upon which hands could be placed had been requisitioned for military service, so severe was the shortage of materials.

On another occasion a young prisoner admitted to the hospital suddenly collapsed. He was examined and life pronounced extinct. Although it was not an expert examination it was accepted and the supposed corpse was immediately taken out and laid in a bath that happened to be handy. The cold night air exercised a resuscitating effect, and the young fellow, unable to get out of the bath, crouched upon his freezing couch all night at the mercy of the inclement weather. He was found in the morning, half dead with the cold and hurried to the hospital, where desperate efforts were made to save him. He lingered for a few days and then died, ostensibly from the malady from which he was suffering; but whatever part the disease may have played, it was only too apparent that it had been materially hastened by exposure during that fearfully cold night.

When a prisoner died, his body was secretly disposed of, and we never knew

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what became of it. The only information vouchsafed was that he had been sent away. Within a short time the truth leaked out, and we began to attach an awful significance to the words "sent away." The prisoners used every means to keep out of the lazaret, preferring to take their chance among their comrades, who were far more solicitous about their continued presence in their midst than were the authorities.

As the weeks dragged wearily by, many radical changes were effected; but every improvement was due entirely to the initiative and work of the inmates themselves. The authorities did not care two straws whether we were alive or dead. German arms were apparently triumphant, so what did it matter whether the prisoners suffered abuse, short commons or were ignored almost entirely! If a man went under, it merely meant one less prisoner to watch and feed. It was simply the undaunted spirit of the prisoners themselves that kept the camp going. The authorities provided us with nothing beyond what was absolutely imperative, and only the incessant hammering of the American

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Ambassador brought about any improvement in our conditions, and to his credit be it said, he always listened patiently to our wailings. If they were well founded he lost no time in causing the Germans to take note of them, and never let the matter drop until his recommendations had been carried into effect.

During the early days one of the iniquities of the camp was what can only be described for want of a better term, the isolation or quarantine camp. It was separated from us as completely as the American continent is separated from Europe by the broad Atlantic. I discovered its existence quite by accident, when trudging aimlessly through the camp one day I caught a glimpse of my friend Moresby White and another prisoner who had been with me at Sennelager, and who had passed through the frightful tragedy of "The Bloody Night of September 11th." I hailed them, but at that moment the two disappeared into a barrack.

Returning to my own quarters I told the others of my discovery. They were incredulous and chaffed me mercilessly over my im-

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agination, but I refused to give in. To prove that I had not been suffering from mental hallucination I hastened off to discover my friends, but although I hunted high and low and made exhaustive inquiry at the barrack into which I had seen them vanish, I failed to track them. I began to wonder whether after all I had not been the victim of my own imagination.

The days passed without any success attending my inquiries, and I was just giving up all hope when I suddenly came face to face with Moresby White. My first inquiry was as to the barrack in which he was living.

"Barrack!" he replied, "I'm not in a barrack. I'm in the isolation camp!"

"Isolation camp?" I repeated in surprise.

"Yes. That place over there!" and he raised his arm to indicate its situation.

"What's it like?"

"Like! Phew! I guess its the limit! It's just running alive!" And the disgust with which he spoke was more impressive than the words themselves.

He was living in strange company, indeed. He shuddered as he related the con-

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dition of his companions and how the whole place was reeking with vermin; from which I gathered he was having a pretty hard time of it. But he was not disposed to be communicative; he had become inured to hardship under Prussian authority, and was content with the foregoing picturesque explanation, feeling confident that I would understand, as indeed, I did. Some days later he was transferred to the main camp.

To judge by the more eloquent descriptions vouchsafed by other prisoners who made acquaintance with the isolation establishment, it must have been a terrible hole. Its reign, fortunately was brief. Even some of the inmates who were not unfamiliar with vermin raised a protest against the plague of parasites there. Their objections were expressed with more violence than politeness and the mutterings were not lost upon the authorities. These unsavory quarters were dismantled, and our warders showed a desire to forget all about them the moment their noisome reputation became common property in the camp.

The circumstance that Ruhleben has never

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been ravaged by contagion offers a high tribute to the prisoners themselves, and is not due in the slightest degree, to German effort. The prisoners speedily appreciated the necessity of observing all rules of hygiene, and introduced measures of precaution as far as was possible within their limited powers. The authorities merely looked on. When the camp began to crystallize into a well-ordered and law-abiding community, and when schemes for effecting improvements were matured, all dangers of an epidemic passed away.



## CHAPTER VI.

### *SANITATION AND HYGIENE*

The German nation would have the world believe that it is unassailable in all that pertains to the science of sanitation and hygiene; but the camp at Ruhleben gave the lie direct to this assertion.

At the time that I arrived at the camp, conditions were ghastly. The authorities had not even introduced the rudiments of a sanitation system; everything was of the crudest description.

Although we numbered around 4,000 souls, there was only sufficient latrine accommodation for twelve men, and even this was of the most primitive description.

We persistently agitated for a reform of the sanitation system, for we feared the effect of the open, foul-smelling cesspool upon our health, but it was of little avail. The

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authorities appeared to be absolutely helpless. Then we begged for further accommodation to meet the exigencies of the camp, but this appeal likewise fell upon deaf ears until we at last succeeded in drawing the attention of the United States Ambassador to the situation. He instantly recognized the legitimacy of our complaints and ordered extensions and improvements to be carried out. While his active intervention brought about a certain amelioration of the fearful conditions, the improvements themselves were of the crudest sort.

It was not until many months later that any efforts were made to grapple with the situation upon scientific lines. Then a flushing system was introduced, which must have been linked up with an existing sewage disposal scheme in operation at Spandau, since the main pipe from the camp passed under the canal in that direction. But even here there was incompetence. The main installed was far too small in diameter to cope with the volume of work imposed; and consequently, blocks in the pipes occurred with alarming frequency and tem-

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porarily disorganized the whole scheme. Still, the installation, despite its shortcomings, served to ease our minds very materially. In due time we were able to shut down the original latrine altogether, and subsequently, at our own expense, turned it to account as a semi-open-air cold shower bath.

In the early days the authorities made no attempt to cope with the surface water that collected after a heavy rainstorm—and it does rain at Ruhleben. Some of the prisoners whose homes were in Farther Britain, candidly admitted that in this one respect the camp reminded them of home. The rain pelted down with the fury of a tropical storm; and under the pounding of 4,000 pairs of feet, the surface of the ground, especially where the maximum of traffic was imposed, became churned into lakes of mud. Roads were conspicuous by their absence. As the surface was wildly uneven and the rain water could not get away quickly by soakage, it wandered here, there, and everywhere, forming uninviting lagoons. We did not object to these accumulations of water save that they compelled us to become am-

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phibious while they lasted; we had to wade, sometimes ankle deep, through the slime, to get our meals at the kitchen.

No effort was made to remedy this state of affairs. One barrack, fringing a depression in which the water always collected, suffered somewhat severely, and when the water gave signs of rising, the inmates of the barrack had an exciting time. A miniature barrage of boards and other accessible materials was run up at the entrance to keep the water out, for this was the only means by which floods could be averted. Even then, the water forced an entry into the barrack, making the interior thoroughly damp. How the inmates ever succeeded in warding off illness was more than the rest of us could fathom.

Things finally came to a pass that demanded drastic action on our part. Whenever we complained to those in charge, they merely met our protests with a non-committal shrug of the shoulders, a shake of the head and eyebrow dancing; so we decided to work out our own salvation. We laid our heads together and discovered that our ranks

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included one or two civil engineers as well as many others who were familiar with road-making tools. The former prepared the designs and the latter, organized into business-like gangs, carried them into effect. An excellent road was driven right through the camp, ensuring us a dry causeway no matter what the weather might be, so that we could move between barracks and the kitchen in comfort and with dry feet. The cost of building this road was defrayed by ourselves, the men who carried out the actual work being paid a weekly wage from a special community fund. The road was so well built that even the authorities were moved to admiration and after it was completed they had the impudence to approach the designers and working gangs to ask if they would build roads for the Germans outside the camp. Needless to say, this cool request met with a very blunt and emphatic refusal.

The road was given an excessive camber, and its surface was tightly compressed so as to allow the water to make a quick and easy escape to either side where it formed stagnant lakes. These lakes furnished amuse-

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ment to the interned sailors, who would fashion miniature boats with paper sails and indulge in model boat racing, pursuing the recreation with all the delight of schoolboys. It was the only way in which they could kill time.

When we entered into occupation of the barracks, lighting, both natural and artificial, was at a serious discount. So far as the lofts were concerned a condition of twilight prevailed throughout the day, the rays of the sun only penetrating the everlasting gloom fitfully through the small begrimed windows. In those days artificial lighting was absolutely unknown. We either had to go to bed with the birds, which was about five o'clock in winter, or spend the evening conversing in the darkness. Nine o'clock was the official hour for extinguishing all lights, but seeing that they were existent only in the abstract, the call "lights out" and the final round by the guard to see that the regulation was obeyed, seemed somewhat superfluous, and incidentally created considerable, though enforced hilarity.

The dreariness of the evening hours grated

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upon our nerves, so one or two of the more dare-devil spirits decided to run the risk of trouble by breaking rules. A few candles were obtained, and the faint soft light shed by them sufficed to invest the forbidding lofts with a little cheer. By summarily taking the solution of this problem into our own hands we incurred the risk of severe penalties, for the authorities dreaded a fire; but to our surprise nothing was said. As a matter of fact, it appeared as if the utilization of candles gave birth to a brilliant if belated inspiration. Electric lighting was installed, at the direct instigation of the American Ambassador, and this was a decided improvement, since it enabled us to indulge in evening occupations and recreations within the sanctuary of our own residence. One lamp, in the center of the loft, was permitted to remain alight all night, a concession we greatly appreciated, because if we could not sleep we could pass the time by reading or writing.

But the most intense discomfort we experienced was caused by the bitter cold. We virtually lay upon the bare stone floor at night—scarcely an inch of straw between the

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hard couch and our bodies. During the winter we were nearly frozen to death. Our limbs were numbed, while we shook as if with the ague. In response to our petition the American Ambassador insisted that the barracks be heated, and to this end a central heating plant was installed somewhat tardily. Undoubtedly the authorities resented this enforced contribution to our comfort, a supposition confirmed by the arbitrary method it was operated. A central station was erected and equipped, pipes leading therefrom to the various buildings, but when first brought into use, the heat was turned on for only a brief period during the day and the degree of heat emitted was almost impalpable, while it was provided at an hour when we could have done without it. Later the authorities appeared to become more intelligently interested in the matter with consequent improvement. Another distinctly beneficial step was taken when the American Ambassador demanded that our beds be raised above the floor.

Strange to relate, it was only those in the lofts who derived benefit from the heat. The



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tenants of the horse boxes got no comfort from it, for the pipes had been placed outside. The occupants were also victims of the drafts that whistled through the space between the partition and the ceiling. They overcame this by pasting up brown paper which unfortunately excluded what little heat there was. This unhappy condition of affairs was never remedied. The authorities had fulfilled their part of the bargain; they had installed the heating system demanded by the American Ambassador, and it was up to the prisoners to devise ways and means to secure the maximum of benefit therefrom.

While the ventilation of the horse-boxes was fairly complete, thanks to the draughts, that of the lofts was execrable. When we first went into residence we could secure a certain degree of ventilation by opening the small windows. But the authorities would have none of this. They not only closed the windows, but screwed them up tightly, and to make sure that they would not be opened surreptitiously they covered them on the outside with heavy wire netting. The reason for this action was never fathomed; possibly

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it was done to frustrate any attempt at escape during the night. What ventilation we received came through the cracks in the walls and the holes in the roof.

The former channels were draughty so that it was necessary to stop them with paper. The holes in the roof had to go untouched, but they were a source of intense discomfort during rainy weather when the water came dripping through, saturating the bedding and submitting the occupant to an unappreciated shower bath. To secure any tangible ventilation we had to leave the door ajar, but as the air came through this opening with the ferocity of an Arctic blizzard we had to close and seal it up.

It must not be supposed that our captors allowed us to lead an entirely idle life. There were certain duties which we had to perform daily, such as collecting paper littering the camp, and sweeping the purlieus of the buildings. There was a huge bin outside each barrack into which refuse and sweepings were thrown. Once a week we were given a wagon, to which the contents of the bins was transferred. Then we had to convey

this garbage to the dump. No horses were provided for haulage; we had to do this ourselves. Teams of prisoners were hitched to the shafts and under guard were compelled to drag the vehicle to a big depression not far away which was being filled up. Despite the arduousness of this work, there was never a lack of volunteers to serve as haulers; it gave us the opportunity for a little exercise and to see something beyond the four walls of our prison.

The attribute of civilization that we missed more than anything else was a bath. The only makeshift, as I have already narrated, was to stand stark naked upon the stone floor of the passageway near the taps and submit to have a bucket of ice water thrown over one by a comrade. We fretted at the denial of facilities to keep ourselves clean, and finally brought the authorities to relent. I have already mentioned the isolation camp not far distant, a feature of which was a hot shower room. When the camp itself was abandoned the shower room was retained, and those who desired a bath were escorted to the building by an armed guard.

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Although this room was dilapidated and extremely primitive, we unhesitatingly accepted the advantages it offered. We were compelled to disrobe, bathe, and dress again in what was virtually all one room and naturally the steam arising from the hot water formed a thick impenetrable fog that saturated our underclothing. It was useless to grumble; we had agitated for bathing facilities and they had been provided. If one's clothing became wet during the process, well, that was the owner's affair. And so we had to retrace our steps to the camp with our underclothing wringing wet, clinging to our shivering bodies.

For many months the luxury of hot water within the camp was practically unknown. We were compelled to walk to the kitchen and ask the attendants for a small basinful. If they were gracious they would oblige. When we commenced to receive parcels of provisions from home the demand for hot water increased alarmingly, since we required it to boil our tea, coffee and cocoa in the privacy of our barracks. If a trip were made to the kitchen it was likely to prove

fruitless; possibly a barrack would be lined up waiting to be served, in which case, no one else could hope to receive attention unless willing to wait at the end of the line. If no one were there, then, for a halfpenny or so, the water would probably be given.

We appealed to the authorities for an extension of these facilities. They listened, and suggested that we erect a special boiler house at our own expense, a concession we gladly accepted and not only did we pay for the materials and erection but for the fuel required to run it as well.

This boiler house proved an inestimable boon. We could get a bucket of water for a penny, and the demand was heavy. A long line would form outside and I have often waited for an hour or more for my bucketful. The venture proved a highly profitable one, and incidentally must have been lucrative to the authorities since they were said to draw a commission of seven and a half per cent upon all transactions.

Hot water was in demand for a hundred purposes, but more than anything else for heating the tins of food we received from

home. At first, it was the practice of the prisoners to go down to the boiler house, pay a penny for a bucketful of water, and then immerse the tins for about an hour, calling for the article on the way back. Subsequently, we hit upon a more economical and satisfactory method of achieving the same end. A string was tied securely to each tin, together with a label bearing the owner's name. The tin was then dropped into the boiler along with others; and several dozen tins could be heated in this way at one time. When the owner came along for his tin, the attendant hauled it out and the owner rushed away to his barrack with it before it cooled. Sometimes the string became detached from the tin, and then occurred exciting fishing matches. Probing in a big boiler for a tin of food, dodging several others attached to their leashes, as well as the merrily boiling water and the blinding steam, was sport indeed, not unmixed with a certain amount of voluble invective upon the part of the attendant, who considered the enterprise well worth the penny levied and who waxed sarcastic at the awkwardness of the owner in

tying the string to the tin so disastrously.

Hot water was also warmly appreciated for laundry purposes. In the early days, washing of clothes was practically unknown. Many prisoners possessed nothing beyond what they wore; and if a prisoner so placed decided to indulge in the luxury of clean underwear he had to wash it out himself and stay in bed until it had dried. As a rule, the garments presented a worse appearance after laundering than before, since soap was scarce and cold water is hardly effective for the purpose. Later, a firm in Berlin undertook to carry out all laundry work, collecting and delivering once a week. This arrangement only benefitted the prisoners who were able to point to a well-stocked wardrobe; those who had but one shirt or pair of socks could not stay in bed until the solitary garment returned; and these were compelled either to refrain altogether or wash their own garments at night, trusting that they would be dry in the morning. When further supplies became available, they were either worn continuously until they could be worn no longer, and then discarded in favor of a new outfit,

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or else the conventional practice was followed of wearing one while the other was at the laundry.

So far as the internal condition of the lofts was concerned we were left to our own devices. At first we were compelled to lie upon loose straw, but this was afterwards stowed into sacks provided by the authorities, thereby forming small mattresses. Today, straw being valuable as a foodstuff, wood-shavings are served out to fulfil this purpose. The mattress idea was warmly appreciated, inasmuch as when the straw was loose it became heavily contaminated with mud and other filth introduced upon our boots, which precipitated a lamentable state of affairs, especially when the straw was periodically livened up, and threw heavy nauseating clouds of dust into the air.

When the straw had been matted we were able to keep the floor in a tolerably clean condition, although the congested disposition of the wooden beds reduced the open space to narrow gangways. These were swept regularly by orderlies appointed by the residents of the barracks and chosen



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from the necessitous members among us, who were paid for their work. Each man in a barrack contributed a penny or more a week to the orderly fund, the contribution varying with the monetary status of the prisoner.

## CHAPTER VII

### *THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNAL GOVERNMENT*

When I was drafted to the central internment camp near Spandau, the community which I found reminded me of nothing so much as a mammoth gypsy encampment. When 4,000 men are suddenly flung into one another's company, chaos and confusion are inevitable. The British colony resident in and traveling through Germany, were so stunned by the suddenness and comprehensiveness of the blow that they failed to grasp its entire significance and effects. Ignorance and uncertainty as to the future caused the time to drag heavily. An atmosphere of utter aimlessness prevailed, and the faint-hearted, fortunately in the minority, settled down in a hopeless comatose state, prepared to accept anything and everything as it came,

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and refraining from lifting a finger on their own behalf.

All things considered, there was a perfectly legitimate excuse for such lethargy and disposition to accept the camp as it was found. The current impression prevailed that we were certain to be released within a very short time; that the authorities had rounded us up merely to keep us under surveillance while maturing a scheme whereby they would be able to keep perfect track of us with facility or to arrange for our repatriation. Many cherished the thought that we should be given our freedom on "pass" once more, or at least be permitted to live within certain areas, where we could be watched without taxing the authorities to any pronounced degree. Naturally such a buoyant hope re-acted against any interest being evinced in our surroundings. We argued, and logically perhaps under the circumstances, that it would be a sheer waste of time and energy to embark upon any improvements, since an order consenting to our release might come to hand at any moment.

The authorities were wily; they encour-

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aged the maintenance of the fictitious theory at the time. It was to their advantage. The Teuton is unremittingly cautious to avoid trouble. In this instance the authorities were quick to seize upon British feeling to the greatest advantage to themselves, and did not hesitate to placate us in every possible manner. They did not openly aver that we were to be released within a short time; they were too shrewd for that. But at the same time they did not deny the current statement which gained credence and widespread circulation. I had already learned to my cost that the German is uncannily adept at this game. I had suffered from similar tactics while languishing in Wesel prison and Senelager camp, and I declined to be lulled into a false sense of security. I communicated my personal impressions to my colleagues, but for the most part, they, being ignorant of the depths of German craftiness and bluff, refused to listen to me for a moment, and I was promptly declared to be a croaking raven.

A certain restiveness and chafing prevailed among the prisoners but owing to the sedu-

TELEGRAMS: "VERBOTEN", SPANDAU.

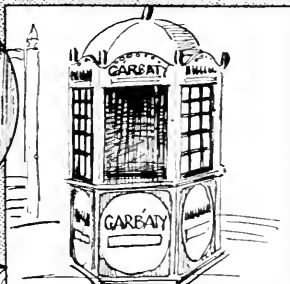
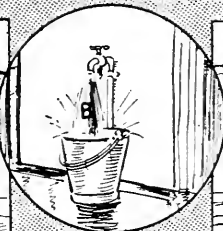
ALL POSTAL MATTER FREE.

# RUHLEBEN ON THE SPREE.

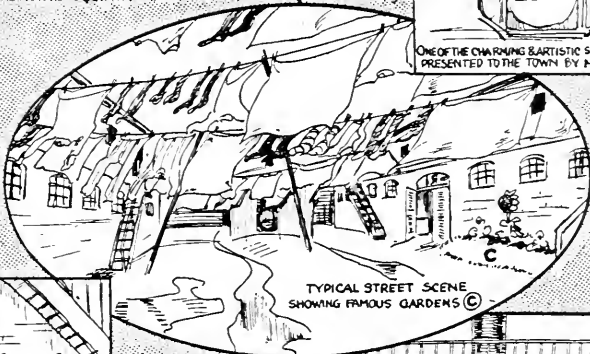
THE RENOWNED RESORT FOR RESTFUL RELAXATION.



ONE OF THE LEADING HOTELS. A, CENTRAL HEATING. B, WATER (COLD & COLDER).



ONE OF THE CHARMING BARTISTIC SHELTERS ON THE FRONT PRESENTED TO THE TOWN BY MC GARBATY.



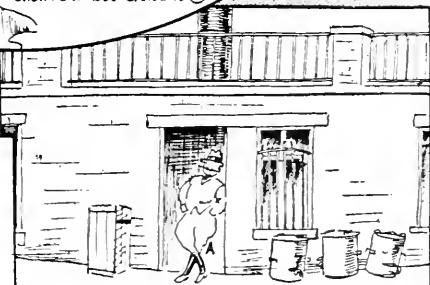
TYPICAL STREET SCENE SHOWING FAMOUS GARDENS (C).



ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SEATS. (A, B, C. NATIVES.)



THE ARTIFICIAL LAKE. A, A PLEASURE BOAT. B, ONE OF THE ONE SWANS.



THE CELEBRATED RESTAURANT DYKE. A, THE GENIAL MANAGER.

**CUBBIE HALL TEMPERANCE HOTEL.** 5 MINUTES FROM RAILWAY STATION. 100 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL! IDEALLY SITUATED. PRIVATE GOLF COURSE. WINTER GARDENS IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION. ENGLISH CHEFS. UNIFORMED NIGHT PORTERS. NO FOREIGN WAITERS. COOKS TOURISTS ACCEPTED. EVERYTHING MODERATE. PROPRIETORS:-LOFTS LIMITED.

An "Advertisement" from the Ruhleben Camp Magazine.



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lous fostering of the idea of a speedy release, open discontent, trouble and agitation were successfully averted. Moreover, the authorities realized that by keeping us keyed up to such a high pitch of expectancy, they were gradually wearing down our high spirits, and that complete relapse would attend the reaction when we at last realized that we had been living in a fool's paradise. It was not until we observed one new building after another going up, thereby increasing our accommodations, that the awful truth dawned upon us. Then we realized we were condemned to stay in this prison for an indefinite period.

Once we grasped this true condition of affairs we surveyed the situation from the only sensible point of view, deciding to make the best of it. Transference from military to civil administration brought a certain measure of improvement, but the former still remained supreme. The camp was closely guarded by soldiers, although armed control within was gradually relinquished and at last ceased altogether as we proved law-abiding and tractable. We assumed the responsibili-

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ties of maintaining order ourselves. Then the soldiers were delegated solely to patrolling outside the camp, sleeping quarters being provided within, and they were dispossessed of all authority over us, for which release they seemed devoutly thankful.

Although our guard was never communicative in regard to the progress of the war, actions were far more eloquent than words. We could not fail to observe how hard the Germans were being pushed for men. When we were first imprisoned, strapping young soldiers swarmed everywhere, swaggering with true Prussian arrogance, flushed with the first smell of blood and disposed to treat us with contempt. Numerically strong, they watched us closely and never hesitated to interfere upon the slightest breach of the myriad regulations which bound us. Evidently they considered "carpeting" a British prisoner to be a highly diverting amusement.

One thing was sternly suppressed. We were not permitted to collect in groups, no matter how harmless our discussions might be. There was nothing to do, and the prisoners were naturally apt to gather in



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this manner to give expression to individual theories, to air speculations concerning the future, or to discuss the topics of the hour. As we gathered the guard would watch us closely, and when the party assumed undue proportions, it would advance and disperse us roughly, taking care to send us in different directions. This unceasing surveillance became almost intolerable at one juncture. It was at the time when Italy's decision hung in the balance. Evidently the Germans, some time before Italy made her choice publicly known, were fully aware that she would cast her lot with that of the Allies. We heard all about it and as may be supposed discussed the situation very animatedly.

The authorities, impressed by our openly declared pro-Italian sympathy, tightened up the regulations. Evidently they anticipated a manifestation of exuberant "mafficking" on our part when the momentous decision was reached by Italy, for they issued a warning that should there be the slightest display of jubilation, we should be severely punished, both collectively and individually. They did not give us any idea of the projected fate

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in store for us in such an event, but contented themselves with uttering dark threats and ominous hints.

However, we were not to be intimidated, although we unanimously decided that, on behalf of the camp as a whole, we would refrain from any public demonstration. We would have a junketing within our barracks after the guards had sounded "lights out." To this end there ensued a heavy run upon spaghetti. Every available ounce of this national Italian comestible was greedily acquired, and we were able to amass impressive stores with which we regaled ourselves joyously and handsomely upon the night when Italy announced her intentions. It was a clandestine "maffick," but all the more exuberant because we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had outwitted the authorities completely.

As the weeks wore on, we noticed that the guard was more frequently changed, that older and older men were successively delegated to the duty of mounting watch over us, and that the numerical strength of the military wardens was rapidly undergoing

marked diminution. This circumstance impressed us more than anything else, and our spirits rose. As the number of soldiers decreased, the barrier which had existed between captors and captives became whittled down until it disappeared altogether.

The older soldiers regarded the situation from a different point of view than the younger men. They had been torn from their homes and businesses, and were inwardly opposed to the war. They nursed no resentment against us; indeed, they were communicative, affable and ready to perform any small duty to ingratiate themselves with us. We saw we were gaining a moral ascendancy over them, and did not hesitate to profit by it. At the same time we were very careful not to tilt against the windmill of officialdom, for we realized that the less we inconvenienced our wardens the easier would be our lot. When at last we decided that the moment had arrived for us to essay to take over the camp and become responsible for its administration, the authorities, impressed by our record of docility and knowing that we were a well-ordered and

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law-abiding community, placed no obstacles in our way. This was a distinct concession, for there were many anomalies and shortcomings, if not actual hardships, demanding immediate redress, which we could effect among ourselves but which the authorities would not consider for a moment.

We decided to run the camp, so far as the limitations would permit, in accordance with British traditions, and to establish British practice and method, right in the heart of the enemy's country. A complete transformation was wrought. The guards came to the conclusion that we were not such bad fellows after all. We reciprocated the sentiment with the result that although our wardens were changed frequently, we always maintained our superiority. It evidently became noised among the soldiers that looking after the British prisoners was a soft and lucrative job. As the economic situation within Germany grew worse, the animosity against us diminished almost to zero, the soldiers rightly concluding that they had everything to gain and nothing to lose from cultivating our friendship, although now and again an

upstart, upon his arrival, would attempt to parade his arrogance and authority.

So far as the authorities were concerned they never wanted to be bothered; it was the system, and not the individual, which had to be taken into consideration. Moreover, we were unremitting in our determination to suppress all attempts at open defiance and lawlessness among ourselves, and if we could not control one of our number, we speedily escorted him to the authorities to be dealt with according to the nature of his offence. The officers themselves expressed their approval of our methods, and when forced to intervene, did so with reluctance.

When we received permission to govern ourselves we decided that we could not do better than to inaugurate a communal control based upon the broad practice followed by every city and town at home. The office of mayor devolved upon the captain of the camp, who was recognized as the sole intermediary between the prisoners and the German authorities. All complaints had to be made through him and his decision was final. If he conceded a complaint was well founded,

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he passed it on to the proper quarter. This move was greatly appreciated by the Germans, for it protected them from many petty annoyances and imaginary worries; and within a short time, they conceded that any complaint which reached them through the camp's captain was legitimate enough to demand investigation or it would never have reached them. Then each barrack elected a captain, who in turn was responsible for the good conduct, welfare and cleanliness of the members resident therein, and he again acted as the channel for all complaints between the prisoners in his barrack and the captain of the camp.

The system worked with wonderful smoothness and satisfaction to one and all. Certainly it contributed in a very great measure to the high reputation which Ruhleben achieved among the authorities. Once the government was established we put our shoulders to the wheels of progress and social reform to improve our position, in which direction we also achieved so many wonders as to earn approbation from our wardens. All things considered we were given a toler-

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ably free hand, no appreciable opposition to our projects being offered so long as we were prepared to defray the total financial expenditure incurred. Naturally, every suggestion had to be submitted to the authorities, but they refrained from exerting more than a fatherly jurisdiction over our operations.

The reform proposals were so comprehensive and diverse as to necessitate the formation of a host of committees, each of which was responsible for the work that came within its sphere of influence. Thus we had educational, theatrical, trading, training and numberless other committees, and I doubt if any municipal community at home could point to such a record of industry and indefatigable labor as characterized the straightening out of affairs in this internment camp. Among these varied committees was one of special significance. We could do practically nothing without money. There was plenty of it in the camp, so the first essential action was the establishment of a sound financial system to enable the public works to be carried promptly through to success.

To this end was inaugurated what might

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be called the Common Fund, which was kept going by contributions from every conceivable source of revenue, such as profits on trading, amusements and other diverse occupations and recreations. When it was decided to establish inter-trading within the camp, private enterprise was not generally favored, for it was thought that this would tend toward exploitation of the majority to the exclusive benefit of the minority. Brief experience, as I shall show later, sufficed to justify our fears in a conclusive manner.

Communal trading was one of the first projects to be attacked in grim earnest. At first, those who desired to supplement official rations by purchase of luxuries, not obtainable from the canteen, were compelled to patronize a tiny cramped stall known as "Pondside Stores," to the benefit of its proprietor, a German woman. When we took over the administration of the camp, a row of shops was built and paid for out of the Common Fund. As a reminder of home, this shopping thoroughfare was facetiously christened Bond Street, and the square at one end of it was called Trafalgar Square.



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Each shop was set aside for a specific enterprise, such as dry goods, provisions, tailoring and outfitting. The responsible government purchased and maintained the stocks for these establishments, purchasing from German houses, and also provided capable managers and assistants, who were paid five shillings a week from the Common Fund.

The government was responsible for the purchase and selling prices of the various commodities—the profit on the goods was settled by a committee—and brisk trading soon caused the Fund to grow rapidly. The majority of the prisoners either received remittances from home or a weekly allowance from a fund controlled by the American Embassy, while there were also many in the camp well blessed with the sinews of war, owing to the indiscriminate manner in which the British element in the country had been rounded up and interned. By the time I left Ruhleben, the Fund had grown to impressive proportions. The transactions within the camp amounted to thousands of pounds within the year.

Although profits were cut fine and business

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conducted on the "small profits, quick returns" basis, the annual aggregate balance was somewhat startling. It was co-operative trading upon a big scale and pursued under peculiar conditions, but no one could doubt its success. This big favorable balance on the commercial and amusement undertakings furnished funds for a variety of other purposes. One salient feature characterized *Ruhleben* life—nothing was free; every enterprise was drawn up to ensure a profit. When the German authorities realized the extent of our inter-trading operations, they divined a source of fruitful revenue and accordingly insisted that they should receive a commission of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent upon the turnover. This amounted to quite a respectable figure—"bunce" for Germany, we termed it—and due precautions were taken to see that the uttermost farthing was raked in. Among the prisoners was a chartered accountant, and he assumed responsibility for the camp government's books. This was an imposing task in itself; and the poor man often worked far into the night to keep pace with the commercial transactions. Compe-

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tent bookkeeping was imperative, for the accounts had to be referred periodically to the authorities, who, in turn, submitted them to Berlin, where they were audited by fully qualified officials and the sum due the German administration duly appraised. It was galling to think that we, as civilian prisoners of war, were inadvertently giving financial aid to the Teuton military machine, but it was a condition that we could not escape.

The Common Fund proved an inestimable boon to the community as a whole, particularly in connection with provisions. Many of the prisoners were denied parcels from home because their families could not afford to send them; and these depended entirely upon the provision shop within the camp, and then could not get what they wanted if the price rose above a certain figure. Thus, butter, owing to the blockade, began to rise ominously, until it notched 4s. 2d. per pound in Berlin. It looked as if the poorer among us would have to go without this article of food; but the problem was neatly adjusted. The trading committee was not saddled with

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the entire cost; instead a certain sum was set aside from the Common Fund toward its purchase; and this contribution not being repayable, actually constituted a gift toward the purchase. The trading committee, in deciding the selling price of any article, based its figure upon the outlay, and, so far as butter was concerned this was reduced to the extent of the free contribution. As a result, the butter was sold in the camp at a price far below what it actually cost in Berlin. Butter steadily became scarcer, however, and the price rose accordingly until the Fund gift lost its significance. The gift could not be increased indefinitely except at the expense of other objects equally vital; and finally butter became obtainable by only a chosen few. The retail price in Germany at the beginning of 1917 reached 12s. per pound, and even at this figure, very little was to be had.

The Common Fund also played an important part in maintaining another equally important subsidiary fund. This was one inaugurated wholly and solely for necessitous prisoners, not a charity but essentially a businesslike proposition. To derive any

benefit from this fund, a prisoner had to reciprocate with his labor. There were many among us "broke to the wide," from circumstances over which they had no control. If they felt disposed to work they were insured a small wage, running up to five shillings weekly, pocket money that enabled them to make purchases contributing to their creature comforts.

Although we made every effort to secure regular supplies the fates were invariably against us. For instance, a consignment of bread would come in on Tuesday, butter on Wednesday, milk on Thursday and so on. The moment supplies arrived, they were announced; thus, on Tuesday, everyone was informed "Bread In," while other commodities were advertised in a similar fashion upon their respective days. Upon being notified, the prisoners would line up in a long queue outside of the shop in question. The stock was so severely limited that it was generally exhausted within two or three hours.

This system possessed certain shortcomings. Those who were flush of funds immediately purchased what they required, while

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those who were dependent upon their weekly wage, which was paid on the Friday, had to go without, all business in the camp being conducted on the "cash" principle. Therefore, to ensure a more equitable distribution of supplies, a few of the more affluent prisoners would club together to make big purchases of the indispensable comestibles, and hold them over until the less fortunate drew their wages. The latter could then buy what they wanted at precisely the same price as if they had presented themselves at the shops.

Among our various enterprises was the establishment of a newspaper. A typewriter was secured, and an unpretentious daily sheet was prepared. When we secured a duplicator we were able to reel out copies by the score. For the most part the contents were drawn from the German press, supplemented by items and gossip of local interest. This enterprise subsequently developed into a magazine, published at irregular intervals, printed in Berlin, at our expense, to which the talent of the camp, pen, pencil and brush, freely contributed, and which periodically, it

may be explained, constitutes a faithful mirror of life in the internment camp, and the irrepressible Mark Tapleyism of the British race under the most distressing conditions. It is a witty and live magazine, all profits from which go into the Common Fund.

While British newspapers were distinctly *verboten* we were permitted to purchase German publications, which were brought in daily, and sold by a German girl. For the most part, the Teuton papers comprised the *Berliner Tageblatt* and "*Aunt Voss*," of which last, rumor had it, special editions were prepared for our express edification, but to the truth of this statement I cannot testify. Delivery was not exactly regular; and as the newsgirl had plenty of patronage we could not understand, at first, her apparent indifference to trade. Later, we discovered that all of the papers were submitted to rigid censoring before they could be brought into the camp, and if they contained a line concerning a British success of arms, they were prohibited. By such action, the authorities doubtlessly hoped to keep us in ignorance of British military developments, but, once hav-

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ing gleaned the reason for the non-appearance of the papers, we naturally measured British successes by the days on which the news-sheets were not forthcoming. As time went on and the number of blanks increased, we rightly concluded that the German army was receiving a series of jolts which it did not relish. Consequently, by forbidding the papers, the Teutons defeated their own ends. Although we were somewhat in the dark as to the magnitude of the British achievements we were free to speculate on the subject.

One day a huge bundle of newspapers was brought into camp, and to our astonishment they were freely distributed among the prisoners who quickly gathered around. That the authorities should present us with copies of a newspaper hot from the press was an outburst of magnanimity which quite overwhelmed us, and our delight became intensified when we read the title, *Continental Times*. We supposed this to be a continental edition of the eminent British daily and we grabbed the proferred copies with eager delight. But when we dipped into the contents! Phew! The howl of rage that went up and



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the invectives that were hurled to the four winds startled even the guard. At first we thought the venerable Old Lady of Printing House Square had become bereft, since the paper was crammed from beginning to end with pro-German propaganda of an amazing and incredible description.

It was a cunning move but so shallow as to merely provoke sarcasm. Time after time that offensive sheet was brought into camp and given away; but on each occasion we subjected it to the grossest indignities we could conceive. What it cost the authorities to endeavor to deceive us in this way is only known to themselves, but it was a ghastly fiasco. Truly, the Teuton is strangely warped in his psychology.

Yet, at intervals, the British press provoked just as an acute exasperation among the prisoners at Ruhleben as the distorted statements and fabrications of their German contemporaries. One London daily almost precipitated a riot in the camp with an article entitled, "Work-shys at Ruhleben," in connection with a report issued by the American Ambassador in Berlin dealing with a special

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and official visit to the camp. This glaring title created a feeling of intense bitterness, and even the Germans laughed at the distortion and imagination of the British scribes. The article was undoubtedly inspired by the fact that the poorer prisoners worked diligently all day while others amused themselves on the tennis courts and football field; but the statements betrayed a complete ignorance of local conditions and of the organization of the camp. There are no "work-shys" at Ruhleben, but there are men who work from choice and necessity to secure the weekly salary of five shillings, paid out of the Common Fund. Work is purposely created to keep these unfortunate compatriots in the position to secure one or two luxuries and comforts which would otherwise be impossible. Even those who play tennis and football indirectly create work, as the courts and field have to be kept in condition, while those who indulge contribute freely to the Common Fund.

An equally fantastic statement in another British weekly caused an uproar. It was stated in all seriousness that one man had

been able to send home £17, which, so it insinuated, he had made at the expense of his colleagues. This story, upon its iteration in camp, provoked a serious situation, for the man in question was receiving five shillings a week from the Common Fund, and he certainly was not in the position to remit to England the sum of £17. Such will-o'-the-wisp stories work far-reaching damage and seriously affect the smooth working of the community. It may seem strange, but such "yarns" as these reached the camp within a very few hours of their publication, how, no one seemed to know. As we were powerless to refute them we were compelled to suffer in silence, while the British public, owing to the absence of any contradiction, is disposed to accept such statements as true. Moreover, such wild and fictitious assertions adversely affect the status of the British press in German eyes. The latter, knowing the true state of affairs, smile contentedly, and having discovered these fabrications, logically assume the remainder of the intelligence published in British papers to be equally untrustworthy. Gross misstatements of fact

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published in the British press, gathered from irresponsible sources, more seriously threaten the equanimity and orderliness of the British internment camp at Ruhleben than the wildest assertions in the German papers. The latter are expected; the former are construed as outrage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *BENEFITS OF THE COMMUNE*

The food issue at Ruhleben has ever been one of the most discussed questions and the cause of the gravest discontent among the prisoners. Milkless and sugarless acorn coffee, black bread, and unappetizing soups of little nourishing value, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be construed into a decent physical maintenance diet. When the economic situation in Germany was comparatively easy, the average menu, so far as the midday meal was concerned, might be set down as soup—pea and cabbage predominating—for three or four days of the week, while on the other days we received such fare as rice and prunes, or rice and sausage. On Sundays we might be rewarded with a small piece of meat, potatoes and gravy, garnished with a small portion of sauerkraut,

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the last by way of a great treat. After the kitchen was taken over by the prisoners themselves, we sometimes received a small bun or other trifling delicacy, if such it could be called, for tea, but only on rare occasions.

At intervals, fish was served, but this was so vile that it was invariably declined. It was quite unpalatable owing to the brine, and moreover was generally in an advanced state of decomposition, which apparently had suffered suspension owing to prodigal treatment with salt. Even the sailors, who were considered to be the least fastidious about their food, would refuse the dish.

When we received permission to run the camp ourselves one of our first actions was to obtain control of the kitchen. We saw scope for many reforms but were rather doubtful as to whether the authorities would allow us to take this issue in hand. To our surprise they offered no objection. The commissariat was at that time in the hands of a contractor who proved to be one of the most despicable of Teuton rascals, nothing less than a profiteer, pure and simple. The food grew worse and worse in spite of the com-

plaints that were lodged almost daily. Those at the head of things usually admitted that these complaints were well founded, and ostensibly strove to effect improvements but without tangible results.

I recall one day when we were compelled to go without our midday meal. It was one of those rare occasions when an officer from Berlin visited the camp. He proceeded straightway to the kitchen to have a look around. Fish was the delicacy in preparation and he investigated it closely, and delivered an opinion that threw the kitchen staff into consternation. The fish was condemned unequivocally. The contractor protested but soon realized that argument with a German official is sheer waste of breath. The officer cut him short, condemned the food as totally unfit for human consumption, and dared the contractor to serve out fish at his peril. While those of the prisoners who witnessed the incident rejoiced inwardly, faces dropped at the prospect of no meat being forthcoming. The officer turned to us and expressed his sympathy at our having to go dinnerless, but he emphatically declined

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to permit prisoners to be served with such vile food under any consideration. He promised us a good tea by way of amends, and he was as good as his word. Not only did he have the offensive fish destroyed before his eyes, but he waited to see that we were not robbed of the rice and prunes that comprised our tea.

Our request to control the kitchen extricated the authorities from a dilemma. Complaints concerning the food had come to a pass that reduced them to helplessness. They were as deeply incensed against the contractor as we were, inasmuch as the government was not being given full value for the money paid for our sustenance. Time after time protests were lodged by the officials in charge, but the contractor always insisted that he was serving us with the very best material that he could obtain at the price, and that indifferent quality and quantity were entirely attributable to the condition of affairs within the country. If he could not get the foodstuffs, how could he supply them to us, was his attitude. It was a specious argument that appeared to quiet the agitation,



but the officials knew quite as well as we did that the rascal was merely exploiting us and making money rapidly in the transaction. The contractor had the best of it until we came along with our suggestion. Then the authorities, seeing the opportunity to end his contract, bundled him out neck and crop on the instant, their excuse being that we, the prisoners, had taken over the entire undertaking and would become responsible for feeding ourselves. The contractor was disposed to put up a fight, but the German military have their own peculiar way of settling such affairs and we were left in undisputed possession.

The moment we secured control of the kitchen the system was completely overhauled. One of our number was installed as controller, while the staff was similarly recruited from the ranks of the prisoners. All were given the weekly wage of five shillings. Of course, the members of the staff were at liberty to profit from "extras" so far as they could, and so long as it was not at the expense of any member of the community, or in connection with the essential meals. For

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instance, such extras as hot water at odd times of the day invariably earned a "tip," in addition to the official charge for the article, but inasmuch as those who rewarded such additional duties were well able to afford it, no harm was done. It must be admitted that the kitchen staff were equally diligent in ministering to the wants of the necessitous as to those of the more wealthy. There was never the slightest discrimination.

Although the "chef" was not permitted to order what he required, but was compelled to utilise what the authorities provided, we benefited from the superior preparation and presentation of our meals, while the controller displayed wonderful ingenuity in rendering the less attractive foodstuffs as appetising as human endeavor could contrive. Moreover, at times, we were treated to unexpected and intensely appreciated delights. Thus, for the evening meal we might be given a dole of tea with milk or sugar, or possibly the acorn coffee was rendered palatable by the addition of milk or sugar—perhaps both. Considering the restricted scale of materials with which the kitchen was sup-

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plied, its achievements were remarkable.

By this time parcels were also being received from home and we consequently became more dependent upon food received in this manner than upon that provided by the authorities. As the prisoners had resolved themselves long since into small cliques, a system of division—in vogue with my particular party—was widely practised. The contents of all the parcels addressed to the members of a group were pooled, to be shared and shared alike. The system was simple. For instance, K—— would receive a parcel on Monday. The member of the party who was fulfilling his spell of duty as orderly unpacked the parcel, noted the contents, and attached the date of receipt thereto. The more perishable foodstuffs were eaten first. On Tuesday, a parcel would come for me, and this would be treated in an identical manner. The orderly would prepare the meals, the menu varying according to the “stocks” available, and in this manner supplies were eked out to supplement, or as a substitute for, the official rations. The orderly was entirely responsible for the party’s

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commissariat, the preparation of the meals, the preservation of the edibles, and their distribution from day to day, during the period of his duty in this connection. When his term of responsibility was completed he merely handed over his stocks and records to his successor. In this way it was possible to transfer the responsibility from one to the other at a moment's notice, and that without the slightest friction or mishap, and we were generally assured of some dainty every day. As a rule we confined the luxuries from home to the evening meal, which we considered in the light of a dinner or high tea. If the parcels destined for the party arrived simultaneously, and we suffered from a temporary glut, then the other two meals of the day were supplemented by such luxuries as the supplies would allow.

By sharing out in this manner all the members of a party benefited, while those poorer members who were denied the receipt of a parcel from home, owing to their relatives not being in the position to extend such assistance, were not permitted to feel their lonely position. The dainties were given to them

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in the true spirit of camaraderie and they did not fail to extend acknowledgments of their thankfulness in such directions as they could. In some instances, unfortunately, a more selfish practice prevailed. I recall one prisoner who was not only flush in pocket, but who received parcels with unfailing regularity from home. The assortment of dainties which came into his hands was astonishing, but he was never known to share a crust with a less fortunate comrade. He would sit at the table with a parade of luxuries—tongue, tinned vegetables and fruit, white bread and butter—and gorge with sublime indifference to the meager fare of his colleagues who watched him with longing eyes as they made the most of their acorn coffee and hunks of black bread. I really think that had it not been for the generosity of the more sympathetic members of the camp who willingly distributed such tidbits from their parcels as they could afford, such selfish gourmands as the prisoner in question would have been deprived of their luxuries by force. But the men, in spite of their famished condition, exhibited wonderful self-control and ex-

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pended their indignation in other directions. Such gluttons were the butt of increasing ridicule, the victims of practical joking and objects of disgust throughout the camp. They were harried from pillar to post, and regarded as useless "black sheep," and whenever a request for release was refused, the howls of derisive delight which went up forced the unpopular individual to seek the consolation of solitude.

The communal government brought about other important changes. Thus, under the original regime, the prisoners had to present themselves at one place for their meals, while another cubbyhole served as depot for the distribution of black bread. It was no uncommon event for a prisoner to be compelled to wait an hour or more in the "bread line" after a similar wait on the kitchen queue. When the snow was deep and the thermometer hovering about zero, this was a fearful experience and many of the men were quite numb and half senseless from the cold by the time they reached the window and received their ration.

This system was changed. Representa-

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tion induced the authorities to concede the establishment of a bread depot in each barrack under control of the barrack captain. Sufficient bread was fetched daily to ensure each man in the barrack receiving his daily ration of one-fifth of a loaf. In this way the long wait in the open air was avoided, an innovation which met with widespread approval. This decentralization extended a further benefit. Those prisoners who were in receipt of regular supplies of bread from home could naturally dispense with the official allowance; but the authorities were not permitted to benefit from this circumstance. Each man drew his ration and if he did not require it, promptly handed it over to a colleague who did.

Communal government also enabled the postal system within the camp to be improved beyond recognition. A post office was established in each barrack. The regulations permitted each prisoner to write two four-page letters and four postcards per month. Naturally, extreme care had to be displayed to keep within the limitations of the censorship, which was rigorous. Thus neither pen nor

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indelible pencil were permitted. Only an ordinary leaden pencil could be employed, enabling the censor to obliterate with eraser any statements to which he took exception. Also, the writing, especially on the postcards, had to be fairly large, so as to be read with ease. Generally speaking the authorities were very fair over the postal material. If the writing was too small the postcard would be returned to the writer with a note calling attention to the reason for its refusal. But, as a rule, if the card was reposted, it was permitted to pass, the authorities being satisfied that upon the next occasion the writer would comply with the request to write in larger characters.

Official stationery had to be used for both letters and postcards, and this had to be purchased by the prisoners, from a small stock carried in each barrack post office. We did not have to pay for stamps, in accordance with the terms of the Hague convention which decrees that the correspondence of prisoners of war shall be mailed free.

The duties of the postmen were well defined and the system worked with astonish-



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ing smoothness. The incoming mail reached the camp early in the afternoon, and at about three o'clock the postman from each barrack presented himself at the official bureau. Here he secured all the letters addressed to the inmates of the barrack to which he was attached. Returning to the barrack, the letters were again sorted, those for the horse boxes in one pile and those for the lofts in another. The latter were handed over in bulk to a sub-postmaster attached to the loft, who, when he received his bag of letters, became the center of a clamoring crowd of inmates and from his point of vantage called out the names and delivered his mail on the spot. The arrival of the post in the loft is a unique memory; the overwrought inmates would loiter about, scarcely able to restrain their excited expectancy of a letter from home, and when the mail arrived there was a wild rush and frenzied hubbub around the postman. When a man's name was called he gave a yell of triumph, seized the letter, and, almost mad with delight, tore the envelope into shreds to secure the contents, which he read and re-read with a joy that is

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indescribable. The saddest sight was the dejection upon the faces of those for whom no letter had come. They would slouch to some quiet corner almost on the verge of collapse, and sit there moping, and even give way to tears over the bitter disappointment. A letter from the homeland, no matter from whom it came—relative, friend or stranger—acted as a tonic of the most bracing description. It must not be forgotten that the mail is the solitary frail link with Britain, and if those at home could possibly take a peep at a barrack when the mail comes in, they would not fail to be so impressed by the vivid contrast of unrestrained delight and utter dejection, that they would undertake to write a note, no matter how brief, to at least one prisoner every day. It is the one vehicle for transporting a prisoner from the deep miseries of Hades to the delights of Paradise.

Downstairs, among the horse boxes, we were quick to seize upon any and every little tradition linked with home, to convey the illusion of being in Britain instead of a German prison camp. The letters were sorted out and grouped according to the in-

mates of each box. Then a box-to-box delivery was practiced. The postman went his round with his bag, gave the familiar resounding rat-a-tat-tat, and when the door was opened, handed the missives to their rightful owners or left them in charge of the orderly. The pleasing fiction not only afforded us infinite amusement but contributed materially to the success of our organization.

Collection was also made daily. The letters were posted in the barrack pillar box and duly cleared by the postman. He kept a register of the names of the inmates of each barrack and the posting of each letter or card was recorded. This was done for two reasons. In the first place it offered evidence of posting, and secondly, it enabled us to keep within the rules, since the postman was able to see, by referring to his records, whether a writer was sending more than the permitted number during the month. If the communication was in excess, it was returned to the sender to be re-posted at a later date if he felt so inclined.

The letters were then taken to the official

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bureau and surrendered to the authorities. The latter also kept a register, which was religiously maintained, to keep check upon each prisoner's dispatches, their number, and dates of mailing. By initiating our system we saved the authorities considerable trouble, as it was quite impossible to smuggle through a letter or card over the proper number. Indeed, we suppressed all endeavors in this direction, since otherwise continuous and bitter friction would have prevailed between the authorities and the prisoners. After having been received by the authorities, the letters were passed on to the censor, and upon meeting with his approval were dispatched to the homeland. All correspondence was subject to one official rule—it was detained in the camp for ten days after posting, for "military reasons." Consequently it takes from three weeks to a month for a letter to pass between a prisoner and home. I might mention that, although restrictions are imposed concerning the number of communications which shall be sent by a prisoner during the month, there are no limitations as to the number received.

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Despite the enormous volume of correspondence handled, I must confess that losses of letters, so far as I can testify from my period of incarceration, were very few and far between. The authorities were exceedingly fair and straightforward.

The system of handling the prisoners' parcels was also free from criticism, although it naturally underwent improvement when we were able to participate in the scheme. The authorities provided a special siding at Spandau in which the vehicles laden with our goods were shunted. These trucks were cleared once a day, a special cart being retained in the camp for their transference from rail to the official bureau. While horses sometimes served for haulage, upon other occasions the prisoners themselves were recruited to serve in this capacity, but this was a task which was shouldered willingly, as it was to our own benefit. As at least 4,000 to 8,000—afterwards from 12,000 to 15,000—parcels\* came to hand every twenty-four hours it will be seen that this enterprise was one of considerable magni-

\* Parcels are now sent to prisoners in bulk through the Central Organization.—H. C. M.

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tude, and I must state, in justice to the authorities, that every care was taken of the articles entrusted to them for the prisoners. So far as is known, very few parcels, from the moment they were taken over at the frontier by the Teuton Government, were ever lost, although some of them reached the camp in a battered condition owing to indifferent packing. In the early days there was a slight outburst of indignation. A consignment of parcels failed to reach the camp. Their transportation had been entrusted to a private organization—not of German origin I might mention—which has always made a feature of parading its celerity of dispatch and prompt delivery. Nothing was heard of the goods for some weeks. Then they were suddenly discovered, tucked away in an odd corner of one of the firm's depots. By the time these parcels reached the camp a considerable proportion of the contents were inedible. After this experience the authorities decided to assume complete responsibility for the transit and delivery of all goods destined for the prisoners, and the system has worked satisfactorily ever since.

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Under official administration our one complaint was the tedious wait in the queue outside the parcel office. I have known a prisoner to wait three hours before reaching the building. But we succeeded in reducing the period of waiting to a very marked degree. Every morning about seven o'clock, a list of the prisoners for whom parcels had arrived was written out in alphabetical order and posted upon the notice board enclosing the boiler-house. Needless to say, prisoners expecting parcels used to gather round this board an hour or more before the list was sent up. Each prisoner would run down the announcement under the initial letter of his name and ascertain what there was for him. Perhaps one or two, and sometimes even more, were reported. He then proceeded to the office, taking up his position in the queue, which often stretched for several hundred yards. The first duty was to secure a ticket entitling him to the parcel. The attendant, after making sure that the request was in order, gave him a ticket, for which we inaugurated a charge of ten pfennigs (one penny) —this was subsequently reduced to one half-

penny—which went into the Common Fund. Receiving the ticket the prisoner surrendered one half of it at another window, thus establishing the first link in the chain of claim and receipt. Then he presented himself at the window coinciding with his initial to receive his goods.

All handling of parcels was carried out under military supervision. Upon arrival they were sorted out according to the initial letter of the surname and placed in a bin correspondingly labelled. Say, for instance, I presented myself at the window. The second half of my ticket was taken, and the parcel for Mahoney withdrawn by a soldier from the “M” bin. It was brought to the counter and unpacked before an officer. The latter made an examination, and no prohibited article being found, the dismantled parcel was pushed over to me, and I was permitted to take it away. Once I had surrendered the second half of my ticket and had received the parcel, all liability upon the part of the German Government ceased. If any contraband were included it was merely confiscated. The system is simple and thor-



ough. No parcel is ever touched by the authorities until it is opened before the eyes of the consignee, so that no complaints of losses in transit can be made.

We were permitted to co-operate to a certain degree with the authorities in handling the parcels, but our staff was never suffered to open, or to touch, the contents. The result of our action was to expedite the clearing of the office, this generally being accomplished, even on the busiest days, in about two hours, while we always succeeded in coping with all parcels upon the day of receipt. In this way we were able to reduce the sojourn in the queue to tolerable limits. If a man took up his position in the waiting crowd and left before his name was called and then presented himself at a later hour, he was fined one penny for his remissness, inasmuch as he had caused a certain amount of trouble. The only exception to this rule occurred when operations had to be suspended to enable the attendant soldiers to take their midday meal. Those who were still waiting, say, at twelve o'clock, were commanded to re-present themselves later,

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but no fines were exacted, the consequent delay being due to the authorities themselves.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *LIFE UNDER THE COMMUNE*

The concession of self government, despite the limitations imposed by the authorities and the military supreme control, effected one important result. It caused us to recognize that our future welfare depended in a pronounced measure upon our individual and collective efforts. Restraint was certainly chafing at times, but occupation is an effective gloom-dispeller. As time passed, we could not fail to feel the gradual relaxation of the rigid and steel-bound regulations. Every member of the community was compelled to tacitly admit that he could become a useful member of the community and that if everyone did his little bit, imprisonment would be robbed of many of its terrors.

The authorities were quick to perceive our amenability to law and order, combined with

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adaptability to circumstances, no matter how depressing they might be. The soldiers, during their times of leisure and while lounging within the camp, often expressed their wonder at our atmosphere of joviality and apparent content as prisoners. Making the best of things was an attitude beyond their understanding.

Crime was unknown in Ruhleben, and bearing in mind the cosmopolitan character of the four or five thousand prisoners, drawn from every conceivable class of society, this was certainly amazing. More than one of our number had "done time" in England, but here the predatory instinct seemed to have become stifled. Now and again there was a slight outbreak of lawlessness, but these were few and quickly suppressed. Men who infringed the rules came to fear being ostracized by their comrades as much as, if not more than, being penalized by the German authorities. Of course, devilment was responsible for a certain amount of friction with officialdom, but these manifestations of lawlessness, if such they may be called, were rather the direct and outward effect of con-

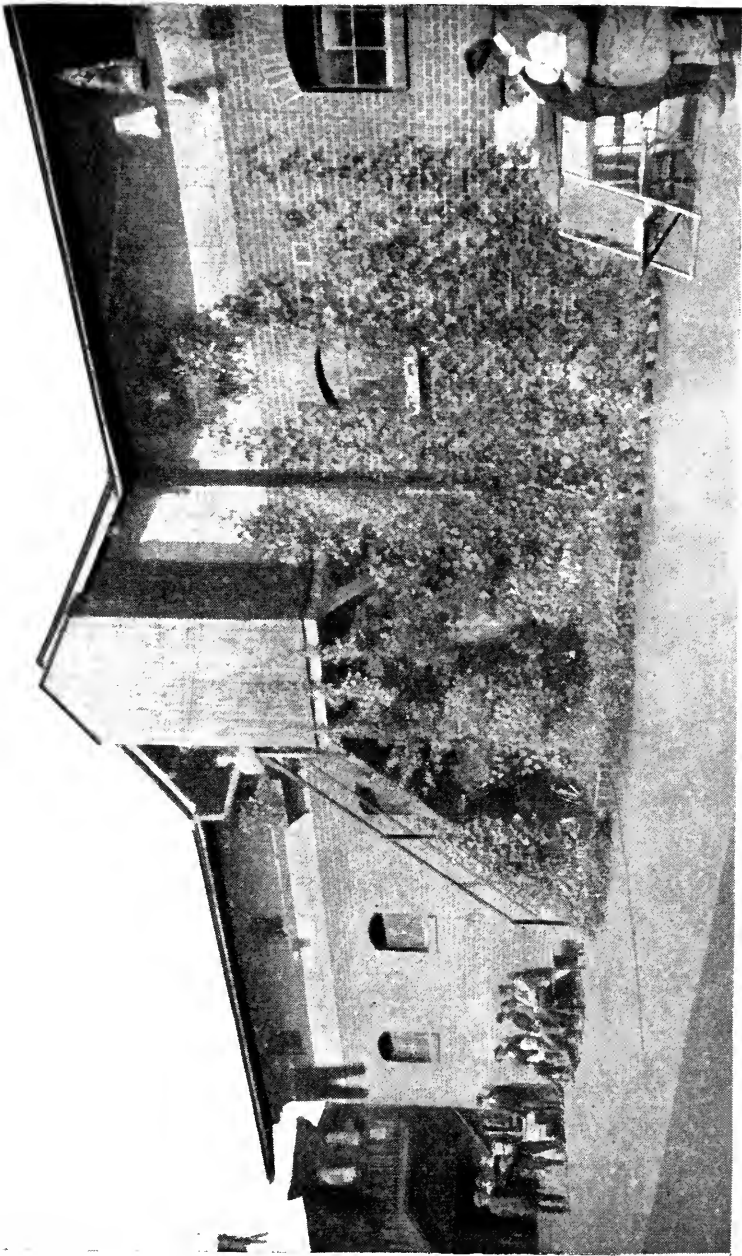
finement. Some of the more irrepressible spirits had to give vent to a certain amount of exuberance, and at times displayed a fiendish delight in thwarting authority, but these were suppressed among ourselves and without official interference.

When the military guard was withdrawn from within the camp a police force, recruited from the ranks of the prisoners, was brought into being. Subsequently, with the coming of the communal system of government, this self-protection became elaborated and established upon a firm footing. A police force, such as would have done every credit to a small British town, was created. It was constituted upon the lines practised at home, although it may, perhaps, be more accurately likened to our special constabulary, introduced at the outbreak of war, seeing that the duty was quite honorary. There was a "chief," with the usual array of subordinate officers; the force, when fully constituted, numbering 45 strong. The utmost care was observed in selecting the right men for this peculiar, and at times, extremely delicate enterprise. As a matter of fact, it

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was regarded as a signal honor to be selected a policeman, and there was spirited competition for a vacancy when it occurred.

The camp was patrolled night and day, the constables after dark, proceeding upon their duties in pairs. The authorities readily assented to this action, once its beneficial effects became apparent, and co-operated with us. The insignia of office was a blue and white armlet worn round the cuff when on duty, together with a small enamel badge carried in the lapel of the coat. Furthermore, a certificate was presented to each member. In the early days the night work was somewhat unenviable, especially when the weather was unkind, but directly sou-westers were supplied from the Common Fund, defiance could be safely hurled at the elements, even when they were most unpropitious. For night duty we were supplied with a small electric flash-lamp, but we were not allowed to carry a defensive weapon of any description, not even a baton. Fortunately, so far as my experience was concerned, the occasion never arose to display force of any description.



OUTSIDE BARRACK 5.

Showing the efforts of the prisoners to improve the appearance of their dismal quarters.





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Perhaps our system was somewhat unique in one respect. We were allotted specific terms of duty. The constable going off duty proceeded to his barrack to call the colleague who was to follow him, and accompanied him to the police station. The first-named then "signed off," and was quite free until his next spell came round.

Our duties were of the most varied description. During the daytime we controlled the queues which lined up outside the shops, the parcel office, the theatre in the evening, and so on. We had to see that the many regulations were obeyed, especially at night-time, and to conduct all those breaking bounds back to their barracks. Warnings generally sufficed to reveal to the irrepressible the folly of their ways, and they invariably accepted our suggestion to return to their quarters. No one but the police was permitted to roam the camp after the prescribed hour, and even the civil constabulary had to acknowledge the higher authority of the military. While patrolling it was by no means uncommon for a challenge to be hurled from a soldier outside, upon detecting

sign of movement within the camp. "*Polizei!*" went the retort, to which was returned a cheery "Good-night!"

During the daytime our work was sometimes more strenuous, especially when the water became a nuisance after a severe rain-storm. Then the police set to digging ditches to allow the accumulation to escape from the causeways, and this was no light task. But after the main road was driven through the heart of the camp, the necessity of becoming navvies upon occasion was eliminated.

We became so effective in our work that the military did not hesitate to call upon us for assistance when faced with a difficult task. One of the shops in the camp was owned by a German woman. She paid 1,000 marks—£50—to secure possession, a fact that will convey an idea of the commercial possibilities within the camp. But something or other went wrong, causing the military to intervene. The cause I never fathomed. The guard closed the woman's shop and then bundled her out of it. She was carrying a valuable stock, which the military demanded should be removed instantly. To ensure this

being done the authorities went so far as to eject the contents themselves, but owing to insufficient strength, they called upon the civil police to lend a hand, the operations being conducted under the surveillance of an officer. The woman was turned out of the camp, lock, stock and barrel, was forced to rest content with what goods she could recover, and was warned that if she were caught in the vicinity she would speedily learn that German authority was not to be defied. The next day the shop was re-opened under entirely new management, with a new stock.

While the police within the camp were conceded certain privileges, the boundary was sharply defined. Two incidents I can recall will serve to illustrate the rigor of Teuton military control, and the absolute indifference of the authorities to any extenuating circumstances. One afternoon, while returning to my barrack, I ran into a colleague of the force. He looked absolutely dejected and miserable. I undertook to relieve him of police duty that night. Then he narrated how he had received a letter from

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home saying his father was dying. He was urgently wanted to complete certain negotiations concerning the transfer of his father's business to him, the son. This man had lived in Germany nearly all his life, was well known in German commercial circles, and the business at stake was one of considerable importance. He asked permission to return home for a few hours, but was put off, though not openly refused, until the final decision of the authorities became immaterial. His father died while he was awaiting a decision. What became of the business was never known.

Another prisoner, also a resident for many years in Germany, received a letter informing him that his wife was ill and was not expected to recover. She was a German, but at first this fact did not weigh with the authorities one iota. However, his persistence brought about a certain degree of relaxation. The authorities would permit him to return home for a day or two, provided he defrayed the cost of the journey, as well as the traveling expenses and maintenance of a soldier who would accompany him as escort.

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"But I haven't a cent in the camp!" he protested. "Grant me a pass, and I'll pay when I return."

But authority would not listen. The terms had been stated. The prisoner could accept or refuse them as he felt disposed.

The man was in a quandary, and those of us who were familiar with the situation feared that he would become demented, as he moped and reflected upon his wife's condition. Thereupon we whipped round, made a collection, secured sufficient funds to enable him to comply with the official requirements, and he departed home, radiant at our expression of practical sympathy, but with the soldier at his heels. He returned to camp within the specified time, but the soldier's holiday had been a somewhat expensive item, the relaxation from rigorous military duty and living being appreciated by the escort to the full.

Gambling was strictly forbidden in the camp, and the police were entrusted with the difficult task of suppressing it. Seeing that cards were played in the sanctuary of a private horse box or under the protection of an

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outpost, who gave the alarm at the first glimpse of the police, it was impossible to entirely suppress this form of amusement. At one time gambling obtained a very firm foothold in the camp. In many instances the cards were secured by some roundabout expedient; in others they were homemade and so diminutive that they could be slipped into the waistcoat pocket without attracting attention.

As a rule, the most formidable misdemeanor with which we had to contend was drunkenness, but as may be imagined, such troubles were very rare for the simple reason that, owing to the rigid regulations, alcohol was difficult to procure within the camp. Now and again a bottle of whiskey would be smuggled in, at a prohibitive figure. The small parties who were able to get hold of this generally imbibed freely if unwisely, and consequently brought themselves within reach of the law. The punishment for drunkenness was excessively severe and the delinquents as a rule were not too intractable, so we generally succeeded in getting them back to their barracks without the

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authorities becoming aware of their delinquency.

But one outbreak brought its due reward. Two of the least orderly members of the community happened to hear that the cellars of the grandstand were packed with alcoholic liquors, the property of the restaurant, and reserved for use on racing and gala days. They broke into this cellar, went the pace for all they were worth, and became disorderly and irresponsible. The military found them wandering through the camp, and they were at once hauled off to the guard-room. Next day they were taken before the authorities and promptly given the exemplary sentence of three months.

Although we maintained a police force we were denied the right to establish a magistracy to deal with even the most trivial offences. The authorities firmly denied us this concession, maintaining that it would undermine the military supremacy since we naturally would be prone to regard a punishable offence in a different light from that of the authorities. Serious cases were promptly referred to the civil authorities at Berlin,

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were given a trial according to German judicial procedure, and sentenced by a magistrate.

I keenly appreciated police duty while I was on the force, since it came as a welcome break in the daily round of toil, but at last I reluctantly relinquished my connection. It happened in this way. I was on duty one night when I suddenly descried a man, fully clothed, slinking in the shadows and making his way toward the prison fence. I guessed at once that it was a prisoner attempting to escape, and at the same time realized the futility of his effort. When I accosted him, he thought all was up. I cross-examined him closely and he confessed his intentions, maintaining that internment was affecting him to such an extent that he believed he would go mad if he stayed another night in the barrack. I saw that the man's mind was fully made up and I was between two stools: as a policeman it was part of my duty to place the man under arrest and to denounce him to the authorities, since we were particularly requested to suppress—in fact, to report—any attempt. On the other hand, I was fret-



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ting from incarceration as much as he, and as there was not a man among us who would not have made a bolt for it at the first favorable opportunity, I decided that I should be in error if I performed my ostensible duty.

Observing the man's excited condition I prevailed upon him to return to his barrack and to lie down, otherwise, if he were not careful, he would be prostrated with illness. He demurred at first, but when I explained to him that he was not in a fit condition to make the attempt, and that owing to his highly strung nerves and excitement he would be caught before he had gone a hundred yards—to escape from Ruhleben demanded remarkable presence of mind, cunning, and one's wits sharpened to razor-edge keenness—he finally accepted my advice. I escorted him back to his "diggings" and saw him made snug and comfortable.

My reflections over the incident were not of the happiest. I, myself, I must confess, was nursing a scheme to get away, and concluded that it would be traitorous to betray a colleague. There and then I decided to resign from the force, and communicated my

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intentions to my sergeant before going off duty. Moreover, I knew that the prisoner whom I had caught would make an attempt to be off possibly the next night. If I happened to be on duty at the time, I felt that I should be compelled to turn a blind eye in his direction. But to have done so would have jeopardised the very existence of the police force. The Germans were uncannily astute in their control of us. If they should catch the runaway, as I felt positive they would, they would be able to trace his movements, and to such perfection as to deduce the time when he broke out of the camp. Then, naturally, their first enquiry would be concerning the whereabouts of the night patrol at that time. Explanations might be vouchsafed, but I knew sufficient of German nature to see that they would unhesitatingly accuse the policeman who happened to be on duty as particularly remiss, if not an actual accessory to the act, and would probably decide to re-assume the internal guard, which we did not desire. Moreover, I had no wish to make acquaintance with another German prison and its maddening solitary confine-

ment. So the police force knew me no more. My resignation was timely, because almost immediately after, the opportunity for which I had been patiently waiting to secure my return to Britain suddenly revealed itself. I embarked upon this hazardous enterprise, confident that I was not imperilling any of my comrades, or abusing any position of trust by my self-preserving action. While, according to the lyricist, "a policeman's life is not a happy one," I certainly derived distinct pleasure from serving on the force at *Ruhleben*.

Although the authorities fed us according to their own standards, we could supplement this meager monotonous fare if we possessed the requisite funds, and were in the position to take advantage of our situation. The Casino was available to the postman, to those who were given a "pass" by the doctor, and to others within certain limits. This establishment was under private control. Here one could get a dinner, comprising a small portion of meat, gravy, and two vegetables, at 3s. 6d. a head. If one knew the ropes this could be washed down with wine,

and sometimes with something stronger, hailing from Scotland, although the latter cost 15s. a bottle. A prisoner acted as waiter, and he was always ready to assist us as far as he was able. The hours were from 6 to 7 and 7 to 8 p.m., the diners being served in two batches. Needless to say I became an habitue of this establishment. Occasionally, to foster an illusion of home, we did things in style. We used to form a festive dinner party at the Casino, paying a visit to the theater afterwards. We could not get to the West-end of London, so contented ourselves with our imagination, supported by some appearance of gay life and the White Way, and had a "night out."

At length the proprietor tumbled into hot water. The authorities got wind that he was making a good thing out of his illicit wine list and came down upon him suddenly and unexpectedly. He received short shrift, was hustled out of the camp, his store of liquors was discovered and confiscated, and he padded the hoof to pastures new, a wiser if poorer man. After remaining closed for a few days, the establishment was re-opened

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under a new management, and with the strings of officialdom pulled more tightly round it. But the Casino was one of those little attributes to the camp which made a prisoner's life somewhat more endurable—if he possessed the wherewithal to go the pace. In my instance, I found it indispensable, for although the food was very expensive, its superiority to the official camp food could not be gainsaid, and my health in Ruhleben was never so excellent as when I was able to take advantage of the good, if limited, fare which the Casino offered.

Under communal government it became possible for everyone within the camp to fulfil some useful service, either to individual profit, or to the benefit of the community as a whole. Consequently, once the scheme had got into its stride, very few slackers were to be found. There were certainly no drones, because we discovered that occupation, no matter how trivial it might seem, served as food to the mind, and acted as an effective palliative against moping and dejection. Possibly the one phase of effort which attracted the greatest attention and achieved

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the most impressive success was education. A powerful committee was formed, and the curriculum embraced virtually every subject under the sun, from teaching the rudiments of English to the dusky members of the community, who hailed from the darkest corners of the Empire, to trigonometry; archæology to arithmetic; microscopy to carpentering; navigation to the study of languages, both live and dead.

An expert in every field of education was to be found to serve as tutor, while there was a ready response of pupils. The system was very simple. Those who were prepared to teach were enrolled as tutors. Classes were arranged and scheduled so as to keep the building set aside for this purpose going at full pressure from early morning until late at night. No fees were officially exacted, although a nominal fee of five shillings per course was instituted. But, as many of the prisoners were so placed as to render the payment of even such an insignificant sum a hardship, it was not demanded. On the other hand, those of us who were in a superior financial position were expected to

contribute towards the support of the scheme, and were always ready to do so. The fees were paid into the Common Fund, and assisted in the acquisition of the requisite materials and books. The majority of the tutors themselves fulfilled their tasks free of all remuneration. If private lessons were desired tutors were free to give them and in this instance they were at liberty to impose what charges they considered adequate. Private tuition was not controlled by the educational committees, and consequently the fees paid for such work went into the tutors' pockets.

The schoolroom was the loft of Barrack 6. This had formerly been tenanted by several prisoners in the usual manner, but the American Ambassador, upon one of his visits of inspection, condemned it as unfit for human habitation, since it was nothing but a black hole. He ordered the residents to be removed and accommodated elsewhere. It remained vacant until at last the educational committee decided to put it to use. Electric lighting was installed, while the space was divided into classrooms by the aid of canvas

partitions. When transformed the school presented a fairly attractive appearance, and proved ideal for the purpose.

A notice was posted at the entrance setting forth the times at which the various classes were held. The subjects were so numerous that the loft was taxed to its utmost capacity throughout the whole day and far into the evening. No difficulty was experienced in finding competent teachers for the various subjects; the camp swarmed with brains. The interned sea captains and marine officers taught navigation; a microscopist was found for this subject; and so on.

I, myself, contrived to squeeze in a period of my busy day to teach the "blacks" the rudiments of English. For the most part, these prisoners were numbered among the crews of the British ships lying in port at the time war was declared, and were first transferred to the hulks at Hamburg, and finally sent *en masse* to Ruhleben. The majority either knew but a few words of English, or could not speak the language at all, while in one or two instances they could only point



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to a smattering of German, in addition to their respective dialects.

One man, a native of Sierra Leone, was totally ignorant of any words beyond his native tongue; he had fallen a victim to the fortunes of war on his first voyage.

These pupils proved extremely attentive and persevering, and by the time I left the greater number were able to read, write and speak simple English quite fluently. Just before my departure each sent me a letter thanking me for what I had done. The language was naive, but its very simplicity was impressive and aroused the favorable comment of one of the chief officials of the camp. I asked permission to take these letters away with me, but as it was against regulations this was not allowed, although the officer confessed that had the matter been left to his personal discrimination he would readily have handed them over to me. He undertook to do the next best thing; he sealed them in a package, with my name and address attached as that of the owner of the contents and placed them in safe keeping

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so that I might be sure of receiving them when peace had been restored.

The study of languages was the most popular recreation among the prisoners, especially those of middle age. There were a number of accomplished linguists among us, and it was possible to secure a competent tutor in any civilized tongue. The students could be seen any day squatting in their bunks or in odd corners, deeply immersed in grammars, endeavoring to subjugate the difficulties in peace and quiet; others walked about the camp memorizing the lessons. A visit to the grandstand sufficed to reveal one way in which languages were being mastered under private tuition. "Professors" might be seen pacing to and fro, with a pupil on either side, explaining rules, repeating idioms, memorizing conjugations and conversing. It was an uncanny babel: French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, German, Chinese and English sharing honors.

Even practical or technical education was not omitted from the list. Necessary appliances within limits were installed, and the work was conducted along practical lines.

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Thus, for instance, the carpentry class was a combination of theory and practice. The camp maintained a carpenter who was a skilled man in his craft, to do odd jobs. The pupils accompanied him on his rounds, learning both by following his operations and by participating in the work. The boilerhouse proved an excellent training ground for those who embraced the subjects of engineering and electricity. The establishment and working of our own local government offered a valuable object lesson to those interested in organization, and business training was not neglected. As a matter of fact, every prisoner engaged in the mastery of some trade or accomplishment.

The official program laid down when the government was first established was somewhat limited in its scope, but as time passed, it grew with striking rapidity. A host of suggestions were submitted to extend the curriculum and the sphere of operations, with the result that the "civil authorities" as the camp government was colloquially known, were induced to embark upon many

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enterprises never contemplated in the beginning.

There was one problem that became the concern of every prisoner. This was his teeth. In the first days of our imprisonment nearly all of our food had been of the sop variety. Soup virtually constituted the staple diet, and in order to render the bread more palatable, we invariably broke it into pieces and allowed it to soak in the liquid. We were provided with neither spoons, knives nor forks, and so were compelled to drink the contents of the basins. At a later date we were able to secure these utensils at our own expense. It is not surprising, therefore, that the question of teeth promised to assume alarming significance and it was only by unceasing attention that dental troubles did not reach overwhelming proportions. The authorities never provided us with a skilled dentist except at our own expense. The doctor, naturally, was of no use in this regard, and consequently, those who failed to devote the necessary attention to their teeth soon regretted it.

I fell a victim to a decaying molar that

racked me night and day. Upon making inquiries among the prisoners I was recommended to an individual who was said to be a skilled dentist. At last I tracked him to his quarters, and an appointment was made to deal with my irreclaimable tooth. I do not suppose an offending molar has ever been extracted under such extraordinary conditions. I kept the appointment, and it was at the hour that the occupants—six in all—of the horse-box were having their midday meal. But this did not perturb the dentist. He jumped up immediately, rummaged among his belongings for his instruments, and forthwith wrestled with my tooth, while his comrades continued eating their meal as unconcernedly as if I were miles away. It was an exciting and prolonged tussle, with the odds on the tooth, while I must confess that it was not free from considerable personal discomfort. Six times the dentist made his attack upon my jaw, and six times was forced to retreat, but with a fragment of the molar as a prize on each occasion. Naturally, there was a grim struggle between the dentist and myself, which at times

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threatened to overthrow the table, but the prisoners did not pause in their meal, except to dodge the flying evidences of the operation. I think all of us were mighty glad when the extraction was decided to have been completed.

But this did not bring me the expected relief. Within an hour or two my face began to swell and the pain became excruciating. I could not touch a morsel of food, nor could I snatch a wink of sleep. I tolerated the agony for five days, and then I was told of a second prisoner who was also a dentist. I ferreted him out. He carefully examined my mouth, and then comforted me with the information that something serious had developed. I asked him to come to my relief, but he resolutely declined, although he possessed his complete outfit of instruments, saying that it was totally impossible for any man to practise this delicate art in the camp, owing to the complete lack of facilities, and hinted that it would have been better had the instruments used on my jaw been sterilized. A third prisoner, who specialized in this profession, and whom I consulted, expressed

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a similar opinion, commenting that he "thought blood poisoning had set in!"

Back I trotted to the prisoner who had pulled my mouth about so unceremoniously. He had another probe, declared that every piece of the molar had been removed, but was unable to give me any advice as to how to treat the wound, inflamed and suppurating, which had resulted. I was in a quandary, especially when one of the other dentists, upon a second consultation advised me to place myself in the hands of the authorities, and submit to a delicate surgical operation in a properly equipped institution either at Spandau or Berlin.

This was the very thing of which I had been in dread. Had I reported myself to the doctor, he would instantly have requested the name of the prisoner who had assumed the responsibilities of practising dentistry in the camp. This was absolutely forbidden by the regulations. To denounce the dentist was to expose him to a term of three months' imprisonment. I had no desire to compromise a fellow-prisoner, so I decided to treat the injury myself, at least for

a time, and my comrades in the horse-box in which we were then residing, gave assistance ungrudgingly. My efforts were successful, so that the denouement, which at one time appeared to be inevitable, was avoided. But I never submitted myself again to the tender mercies of a Ruhleben expert dentist, practising surreptitiously!

The teeth issue assumed such a serious aspect as to precipitate a crisis. Then it was decided to establish a dental hospital upon a small scale within the camp. The authorities raised no objection to the proposal so long as they were not called upon to contribute financially towards the scheme. A building was set aside, and this was equipped with everything of the very latest type, at our own expense, supplemented by practical assistance from the American Embassy. The two dentists whom I had consulted during my tooth trouble, and who had refused assistance owing to the unfavorable conditions, were appointed dental surgeons, and from that moment all anxiety in regard to teeth vanished. The equipment of this dental surgery probably constituted one of the most



costly individual enterprises ever attempted in the camp, but the results achieved fully justified the expenditure incurred.

Eye trouble was another physical ailment that occasioned considerable anxiety. The authorities attempted to meet this issue by delegating an eye specialist to visit us. We were to pay for all treatment received. However, the scheme was never a success, for the official oculist was not popular. When his services were enlisted, he would remark, "Oh! You want an examination of the eye! Well, it will be 7s. 6d.!" And he would not lift a finger until the fee was paid. The charge was considered to be extortionate; the majority of prisoners could not afford it, so suffered in silence. That oculist certainly failed to build up a flourishing and lucrative practice in Ruhleben.

Many of the prisoners have contracted short-sightedness, cataract, or some other eye disease, due entirely to the lack of adequate lighting facilities within the barracks, indifferent food, and wretched sanitation. I have seen prisoners striving to write and read under the scanty illumination offered by

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a hard-puffed cigarette, or crouching as closely as they could against the dirt-be-grimed tiny window through which the daylight endeavored valiantly to struggle. The gloominess of the lofts, which was never entirely dispelled, even with electric lighting, taxed the powers of the eye to an enormous degree. Few prisoners will come back from Ruhleben without permanently defective eyesight, the direct result of the abominable conditions which prevailed in the camp. This was one of the shortcomings which the communal government was unable to remedy, although on more than one occasion it was suggested that we should establish our own eye hospital with competent oculists selected from the prisoners themselves, if such were to be found, or maintain the appointment of a competent German specialist out of the Common Fund. But the recommendation never proceeded beyond the projected stage, probably owing to the cost.

The civil authorities did succeed in founding a lazaret within the camp. It was established close to the official doctor's bureau, so

that this worthy had merely to exert himself to the extent of walking through a door in the wall. This hospital was equipped on a comfortable scale, and was infinitely superior to the official establishment provided for cases demanding surgical treatment. But, unfortunately, the provision of this indispensable auxiliary only served to render the inestimable doctor more indifferent than ever, although there was a certain manifestation of method in his madness. If he were summoned to attend a patient lying in his bunk he would refuse to visit him. If we told him that the patient was unable to come to the surgery, he merely retorted that under such circumstances the "man ought to be in the hospital." When we pointed out that he was not so sick as to demand removal to the hospital, he then replied, "If the case is not sufficiently serious to warrant hospital treatment then the patient is well enough to visit the surgery!" So it will be seen that the official had us both ways. Many a sick man would willingly have gone to the hospital to ensure a visit from the doctor, but hesitated because he did not want to tax the

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facilities of this small institution, feeling that it should be reserved for those who were in more serious need of such attention. If every sick man, to force the doctor's hand, had gone to the hospital, it would have been continually overcrowded, while the waiting list would have been sufficiently long to have kept every bed occupied for months.

It was the establishment of autonomous government which made life in Ruhleben more bearable. The inauguration of trading enabled us to gratify whims and fancies, and allowed us to render our unenviable residences more comfortable. Thus, when the party, six all told, of which I was a member, moved from the loft to a horse-box, the authorities granted us three beds, or apologies for beds, merely boards nailed to battens, and raised a few inches above the floor, with straw—subsequently wooden shavings—stuffed into a sack to form a mattress. Yet three of us were forced to be content with the couch the floor itself offered, and this in defiance of the fiat issued by the American Ambassador, that every prisoner's bed was

to be clear of the stone paving. However, we remedied the deficiency ourselves. We purchased the necessary material and fashioned three extra beds. Then I bought a powerful acetylene lamp, which I used to light my business premises, but took home with me every night to flood our apartment with a brilliant illumination. At a later date we secured batteries, and wired our horse-box, to provide a small electric light over each bed, which, provided with an independent switch, enabled any one of us to read and write after the others had retired to rest, and that without disturbing them by general illumination. Little embellishments were continually being introduced, but entirely through our own efforts and at our own expense, the upshot being that ultimately our flat was as snug and cosy as a prisoner could wish. If only the feeling of confinement had been less irksome, the food adequate in quantity and appetising in quality, and the atmosphere within the barracks less reminiscent of a sewer, life in Ruhleben would have been comparatively happy.

## CHAPTER X.

### *OUTDOOR RECREATION*

During the closing weeks of the year 1914, life at Ruhleben was intensely dreary. There was nothing with which we could while away the many hours of enforced leisure; the only forms of recreation available were promenades up and down before the grandstand to the monotonous thunder of the guns undergoing test at Spandau, tag, and other similarly juvenile games.

The camp conjured up vivid memories of the congested corners of our towns and cities. The "lungs" were extremely limited and the only open space was before the grandstand. During bad weather even this was unavailable, and when the weather broke the utter aimlessness of our existence had driven our spirits to low ebb and we had little heart for amusement.

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The greatest excitement, as already mentioned, was derived from a ball contrived of rags. It was something to kick and throw about, and we indulged to the full in the game of rounders, which afforded us a certain amount of the exercise of which we were in need. When a rubber ball was obtained, we became as excited as children and a game of modified baseball became the subject of keen interest. But even the best of games becomes tiresome when pursued hour after hour without a break, and so we cudgelled our brains to devise variations and novelties so far as the limitations of a single rubber ball would allow.

I have an idea that the lack of excitement even palled upon our guards. If they had anticipated lively times keeping us in order, they were doomed to disappointment, and time hung heavily on their hands. "Lining up" the prisoners was the most active occupation left open to them by the authorities, and the stentorian order, "Line up," was roared so frequently throughout the day that it became the joke of the camp.

"Line up" was the brief order to parade.

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Every prisoner, no matter where he was or what he was doing, had to present himself. When we had lined up, we were counted and re-counted several times, to make not doubly or trebly, but octuply certain that we were there. The first line up of the day occurred between half past six and half past seven in the morning, preparatory to our march to the kitchen for breakfast. The time varied according to the order in which one's barrack went to the kitchen. We went in rotation, at intervals of about fifteen minutes, but the arrangements were so conducted that the times varied from day to day for parading each barrack. For instance, Barrack 1 would be first on Monday, second on Tuesday, third on Wednesday and so on, so that each barrack took turns.

Then came the "bread line," the source of much amusement among the prisoners during the earliest days, although it assumed a pathetic interest some time later when provisions commenced to grow scarce. We were paraded when our allowance of bread was sent for and again when it was distributed. Certain men were selected to go to the "cub-



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byhole" serving as the bread store to receive in bulk, the ration for a whole barrack. There was also a line up before and after the midday meal, and another previous to the receipt of supper.

These were the scheduled "line ups," if such they may be termed. In addition there were what we described as emergency "line ups." The camp was provided with a bell—curfew we dubbed it—which no prisoner was permitted to ring unless he was prepared to receive a spell of imprisonment for committing what was regarded as a serious breach of the regulations. Whenever this bell was rung every prisoner had to respond immediately and to "fall in" on parade.

The official line ups were regarded tolerantly by the prisoners. A certain amount of time was occupied in the process, which left us so much less to worry away according to our inclinations and ingenuity. But the emergency parades were regarded with ill-concealed ill-humor, because many were useless, and, I believe, were imposed as a test upon the guards more than anything else. They reminded us of the practice calls at fire

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stations, though with less purpose. But we had to parade, and possibly were called upon to withstand a vexatious ordeal. An official would stroll up, and possibly treat us to a brief harangue upon some topic. At other times he would make, as it were, an inventory of the prisoners, conveying the impression that the authorities were engaged in sorting us out in preparation for some new decisive action, which might be to our benefit, or possibly lead to speedy release.

Thus the officer would call out, "How many married men here?"

Up would go a show of hands from the prisoners.

"How many prisoners have German wives in Germany?"

Another show of hands.

"How many Irishmen are there here?"

A further display of hands.

"How many have businesses in Germany?"

And so it went on. Many of the interrogations were so puerile as to be amusing, but repetition staled their novelty.

What little open space we possessed for

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recreation was naturally reduced when the authorities encroached upon it to build two further barracks. One of these new residences, Barrack 13, was colloquially known as the "Blacks' Barracks," as negro prisoners were segregated there. And these poor fellows suffered terribly. The building was of wood, and although a pipe-heating system was installed it was totally inadequate. Those who had lived in tropical climates suffered severely. They went about in a semi-lifeless condition, and were ravaged by illness; but they preserved a wonderful cheerfulness through it all.

Among the prisoners were several acrobats and gymnasts who suffered intensely from the effects of overcrowding. They tried courageously to keep in practice but were finally compelled to give it up. Acorn coffee, black bread and soup form a poor diet upon which to prosecute physique-taxing work. In fact, every prisoner who was accustomed in normal times to exercise regularly, felt the absence of facilities and the low caloric value of the miserable food served out to us to an acute degree.

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One prisoner, whom we nicknamed "the Cat," absolutely refused to become the victim of Prussian rule. From the morning after he arrived, he indulged every day in his round of physical exercises or Swedish drill. The wretched food did not succeed in quenching his enthusiasm or determination, and even the weather failed to dissuade him. One of his exercises provided the camp with infinite amusement, and suggested his nickname. It was a kangaroo-like jump or hop on both feet with hands on hips, which we construed into a cat dance on hot bricks. We used to banter him unmercifully, gathering around and mimicking the barking of dogs, but he was not in the least put out by it, and accepted the sallies good-naturedly carrying his exercise through to the end.

That man earned and maintained the admiration of the entire camp, for despite our short commons he kept himself in excellent health. When the communal government was established he offered to teach physical culture, a course that seemed sadly out of harmony with the conditions. His offer met with ready and wide acceptance,

and he succeeded in producing one of the finest bodies of men in the camp, trained to a high pitch of efficiency, who went through their evolutions with the precision of a chronometer. The displays of his class constituted one of the most widely appreciated diversions of the community, and incidentally, it may be stated, "the Cat" succeeded in forming the largest individual class in the camp, consisting of eighty men.

It was interesting to notice how at the first opportunity, the prisoners enthusiastically embraced what might be termed the Britisher's first and foremost sport—boxing. We had many first class exponents of the noble art among us, and as soon as the necessary materials could be obtained, a boxing craze set in. The "cracks" readily secured pupils and bouts were in progress throughout the day. Then we established a scientific ring, provided with all the necessary equipment, and boxing tournaments became one of the features of Ruhleben. Battles royal were fought and won, and they were waged in no half-hearted manner either, although insufficient food robbed the men of stamina.

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When we commenced to receive food from home, there was a marked improvement in the men's physical condition, and interest in boxing correspondingly increased. At some of the contests the spectators' shrieks and howls of excitement drowned the sonorous thundering of the guns at Spandau.

German officials and military regarded these exhibitions with ill-disguised hostility. The Teuton is a wretched sportsman, and he cannot understand where we discover any delight in knocking one another about for the sheer amusement of the thing; but the greatest resentment was because we were fostering the fighting spirit. Anything in this direction was regarded askance. The authorities never openly suppressed this recreation; but they manifested their displeasure in devious, subtle ways.

If a boxing match were in progress the military guards, although armed with rifles and at liberty to use them if provoked, discreetly kept in the background; and although the contestants went at each other hammer and tongs, no attempt at interference was

ever made and the fights were fought to a legitimate finish.

Notable leaders in other British sports were also to be found among us. Football was represented by "Steve" Bloomer and "Freddie" Pentland. As soon as the prisoners had become resigned to a long stay in camp, these two sportsmen endeavored to get things going. They wrote to friends at home asking for a football and the other dozen and one incidentals necessary to pursue the game. When a kindly sympathizer sent a ball, the camp went wild with delight and life assumed a brighter guise. That ball revived our drooping spirits as speedily and completely as the sight of gold affects a prospector, and the fun we extracted from the football would pass all comprehension.

The congestion and overcrowding resulting from the encroachment upon our available space to receive the two additional barracks, caused us to look through the bars of our prison upon the expanse of the race course more wistfully than ever. If only we could get out there what a time we would have. The authorities were ap-

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proached, but they did not appear to be impressively struck with the brilliancy of our proposal. Still, the mere fact that they did not refuse the application point-blank seemed hopeful. We all knew something about the Teuton Circumlocution Office, the tangle of red and blue tape which prevails, and the tedious journeys from department to department, which a request had to make before a decision could be given.

Eastertide, 1915, was a joy-day to us. A section of the forbidden ground, which we nick-named the "Field," was thrown open to us, and was to be available as long as we behaved ourselves. We received the concession with wild jubilation, and the first celebration was a football match between two sides, captained by "Steve" Bloomer and "Freddie" Pentland respectively, the Governor of the Camp, Baron Scherein, honoring us by kicking-off. We all felt like a troop of schoolboys who had been unable to visit the playground for days on end.

One must not run away with the idea that the authorities were manifesting unwonted generosity to us in this connection. They



were gracious enough to concede us the use of this ground, but we paid £50 from the Camp Fund for the privilege. Moreover, the hours when we should be at liberty to roam this enclosure were rigidly set forth. They were from 9 to 12 in the morning, and from 2 to 4.30 or 5 in the afternoon. During the height of the summer, when the days were long, we received an hour's extension, the "Field" being kept open till six o'clock. We were warned that, if we did not abide by the official times, we should incur the risk of losing our playground, but we were so thankful for what we had received that even the wildest among us was prepared to fulfil the official regulations to the letter. The Camp Police were entrusted with the task of clearing the enclosure at the specified hours, but no difficulties were encountered: the concession was far too valuable to be abused.

Soon the football fever gripped everyone. Bloomer and Pentland took the matter in hand and evolved a magnificent organization. Membership was open to anyone who cared to join and each barrack soon had a crack team. The two organizers undertook

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the training of the enthusiasts and in the beginning this was not without its comical aspect. The giants recalled their football days and triumphs at home, and determined to show their compatriots what they could do. But they had forgotten to make due allowance for the period of idleness during which they had grown rusty, and they failed to recognize that our official food was not conducive to staying power. The teams started off promisingly enough, but evidences of distress were speedily forthcoming on all sides. It was truly a survival of the fittest, and not a man of us but confessed that he had failed to appreciate how much he had fallen out of condition.

Training and more nourishing food—received from home—worked wonders. When the season was at its height the matches which were played between the barrack teams were worth going miles to witness. Each team had by this time received an appropriate nick-name. One was known as the “Canaries,” from the colors sported on their jerseys—we did the whole thing in first-class style, and by hook or crook fitted ourselves

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out to the last detail. Another was dubbed the "Cock-a-Doodle-doo's," from good-natured bragging of their prowess.

Once football got into its proper swing, "League" games were inaugurated to put greater vim into the matches, both among the players and spectators. The supporters of each side rolled up in overwhelming strength, and they vied with one another in cheering and spurring their representatives quite as keenly as the teams battled between themselves.

But the event of the season was the "Ruhleben Cup Final." The scenes witnessed at the Crystal Palace at the decisive contest for football supremacy were mild in comparison with those seen at the internment camp. What we lacked in numbers from the spectator's point of view was more than redeemed by lung-power. Every effort in the cheering line was reserved for this great day, and our wardens were bewildered by the strenuous manner in which we let ourselves go. One would have thought, from the deafening final cheer which went up from 4,000 odd throats, that the British Army was cross-

ing the Rhine, instead of its being a pæan of praise to the crack barrack football team of an internment camp.

Football was the sport king until the weather grew too hot for such strenuous exercise. Then King Willow came into the arena. The success that had attended the efforts of the football enthusiasts in obtaining equipment for their game induced a similar attempt to be made to secure the where-withal to pursue the summer game with equivalent enthusiasm. Bats, balls, stumps and nets poured into the camp, and the vogue of King Willow during the season was every whit as triumphant. Everyone was invited to become a member of the club, and the nominal fee of sixpence was levied for permission to join the active ranks of either the cricket or football enthusiasts.

Here, again, inter-barrack matches were played to decide the championship of the camp. In order to prevent the complete monopoly of the field for match games, the latter were generally restricted to the afternoon, which left the field clear for three hours during the morning for practice at the

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nets and scratch team encounters. The big matches were played after the Australian system; that is, they were fought to a finish, whether they lasted one, two or five days, and the enthusiasm was quite as frantic and sustained as in the winter game.

The cricket matches, however, had one humorous aspect not seen in the football bouts. As a rule, play was possible only from two to six in the afternoon, without a break. But the needs of the inner man and Prussian system enforced an interlude. About half past four the barracks began to line up to proceed to the kitchen for tea. As this hour approached, those who had no parcels from home with which to regale themselves suddenly scampered from the field to appear in the parade, both players and spectators alike, and it was amusing to see those of the former who were dependent upon the kitchen suddenly dashing across the field as if bereft—each intent upon reaching the kitchen on time. Some exciting impromptu sprinting matches were witnessed and afforded great delight to the spectators who were able to dispense with the official meal.

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These latter used to linger until the drawing of stumps and the clearing of the ground, and then return to their barracks to discuss the game over a leisurely meal.

Even golf was played, although it was of distinctly unorthodox character. It started in quite a humble manner, and at first we had to be content with a curtailed playground skirting the barracks. Clubs and balls were procured, and the players amused themselves with short strokes and putting, with empty condensed milk tins sunk in the ground to serve as holes. The golf enthusiasts, not to be outdone by their footballing and cricketing colleagues, approached the authorities with requests for facilities to indulge in their favorite game. But this was a more difficult matter to decide. Cricket and football could be played upon the one ground, according to the season, but golf demanded special arrangements. At first, the requests met with no success, but finally a possible way out of the difficulty was discovered. Golfers were given the exclusive and unrestricted use of the field for at least one hour and a quarter every day. They

were at liberty to enter the field at half past seven in the morning and remain there in undisputed possession until nine o'clock, when the ground was thrown open to the general public after which they had to refrain from driving. The regulation was very explicit on this point, for indiscriminate driving might injure the other prisoners. Accordingly, after nine o'clock, the golfers had to content themselves with short strokes and putting.

To take part in this game was a more difficult matter. It was rendered rather exclusive through official action, owing to the privilege of entering the field at an early hour and enjoying its unrestrained use for a period of the day. No prisoner was permitted to join the golf club until he could produce satisfactory evidence of being a member of a recognized golf club at home. By imposing this restriction, the authorities prevented everyone from suddenly developing into a golfer merely in order to get a further hour or so of pleasure on the field.

Tennis also claimed its devotees. A section of the cinder track, for which another £50

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had to be paid, was set aside for this game. Three courts were laid down originally, but these proved insufficient and four more were added, making seven in all. The nets and other equipment were hired from a German firm. Tennis was a pastime of what might be termed the elite at Ruhleben. The running expenses were naturally heavy, while the game failed to make general appeal, being voted as too tame and feminine. Moreover, the club was somewhat exclusive with membership fee at one guinea for the season, which effectually debarred the greater number of prisoners, even had they been anxious to participate.

It was the tennis courts and their animation that played a prominent part in one of the official reports concerning Ruhleben, and that conveyed to the general public at home an erroneous impression of life in a German internment camp. No mention was made in this report concerning the payment of £50, or that the club was self-supporting and only accessible to a privileged few. Nor was there a word to indi-





AN OLD ADVERTISEMENT IN A NEW SETTING.  
One of the cartoons from the Ruhleben Camp Magazine.  
Christmas, 1916.



cate the advantage of these courts to the poorer prisoners. The courts had to be kept going, and this work was carried on at the club's expense, thus providing a paid occupation for some of the men.

Track athletics were not neglected. A Sports' Committee was formed under the communal government, which finally became one of the most important and powerful in the Camp. The first meeting of significance was held on Whitsun Monday, 1915. The events were varied and attractive, ranging from running, walking and sprinting matches to contests of a more mirth-provoking character. Some idea of the importance of this meeting may be gathered from the circumstance that the prize list comprised no fewer than 22 silver cups and 122 silver medals paid for from the Committee's funds. Everyone was invited to participate, the entrance fee being nominal, and the whole of the day was given over to the meeting. The prizes were awarded at a later date, after I had been able to complete the engraving of the inscriptions. The crowning feature of the day was the presentation of a silver cup

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to the Baroness Scherein, the wife of the Camp Governor, who was frequently present, and who, like her husband, was a general favorite among us, although she was prevented, owing to the rigid regulations, from giving us material assistance.

Another diversion which proved a brilliant success—while it lasted—was a big snowball battle, with which we endeavored to liven a dreary spell of winter. Several days we were engaged in the preparations for this Homeric struggle. The sides were selected, each comprising from 150 to 200 combatants, while we raised entrenchments, built fortifications and prepared huge supplies of munitions in the form of snowballs. The troops were trained in true military fashion and the battle was fought with rare gusto. Unfortunately it was summarily interrupted by the authorities. The soldiers had gathered round enjoying—as spectators!—the fun, but as we warmed to our work, and became excited, shots went wild, and the military unwittingly received one terrific fusillade. They interfered and we had to sound the “cease-fire.” I have every occasion to remember

this event, inasmuch as one of the opposing side, in his excitement, picked up, not a snowball, but a substantial piece of brick, which he hurled at me. It caught me upon the head, knocking me over like a nine-pin, and causing me to be considered a real casualty.

But the snowball fight revealed two striking facts. The one was the veiled opposition of the authorities to anything pertaining to fighting, even in jest. They watched us narrowly as we performed military drills in anticipation of the coming day, and followed our evolutions closely. The way we went at it was also an eye-opener to the soldiers, provoking one or two to comment that if we fought with such fierce determination and gusto in a mimic conflict with snowballs, what should we be like in the real thing? They had full occasion to satisfy themselves upon this point a little later upon the Western Front, as we learned for ourselves.

The second fact which arrested our attention was the effect of environment upon some Britishers. Among our number were

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many who were Germans in all but birth. They had lived in the country since their cradle days, and had become saturated thoroughly with German methods, mannerisms, ideas, and meek subserviency to military rigor. Their sympathies were avowedly German, and they were typically Teuton at heart. Some of these individuals came within the zone of snowball fire, and their instant action so arrested the attention of both sides that we turned round and pelted them unmercifully, resuming our internecine war when we had hounded them from the spot. But at the drenching with the snowballs these prisoners crumpled up completely. They were terrified, hid their heads, and bolted from the scene like startled rabbits. It was difficult to believe that they were of British extraction; every British instinct appeared to have been eliminated completely. It was this display of abject cowardice which caused us to reflect, after the snowball strife was over, and to wonder among ourselves as to whether they were not a source of insecurity among us. We decided to act and talk discreetly when in their company, and

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later were very glad that we had done so.

Deprivation of the use of the "Field" was regarded as a severe penalty both by the authorities and ourselves. On one occasion it was closed for three days as a punishment for some offense against Teuton propriety; but as a rule, closing for one day served as penalty for a misdeed. Even to be forbidden its use for one day was sorely felt. On such occasions we used to gather about and peer more forlornly than ever through the fence at the expanse of inviting sward, our discomfiture being more acute after having tasted of the pleasures it afforded.

One incident which caused this penalty to be visited upon us is worthy of remark. It was the Kaiser's birthday. A huge flagpole was planted in the camp and a workman was brought in specially to complete the final arrangements preparatory to its use. Naturally, upon the celebration of the Emperor's natal day the German eagle was hoisted amid Teuton "Hoch-hochs." When we trooped out of the barracks and caught sight of the hated emblem of Kultur we could not refrain from inward cursings, but

we withheld all outward signs of our resentment.

We were loitering around gazing idly upon the flag fluttering in the breeze, when, to our amazement it suddenly fell to the ground. Excitement mounted to fever pitch. What had happened? Was the fall of the flag a happy augury of the forthcoming collapse of the Germanic Empire? Our drooping spirits rose at the thought. We felt disposed to cheer, but we controlled ourselves. It would have been construed into manifestation of *lese-majeste*.

We looked on wonderingly, and presently the German officials, who had observed the precipitous descent of their emblem, hurried up in high dudgeon. They examined the cord. Yes! As they had surmised, some detestable *schweinehund* of an *Englander* had severed the rope! The clean cut of the tool was there in evidence. We were promptly paraded, harangued, threatened with this and that, and finally were told that we should be forbidden the "Field."

When outraged German dignity had expended its wrath, the Captain of the



Camp stepped forward. In deferential language he explained that no Britisher had been guilty of such misconduct as was alleged. In veiled words he intimated that no prisoner, much as he might detest the German flag, would be so foolish as to cut it down in an internment camp. The explanation was received with ill-grace, and with conspicuous reluctance we were dismissed.

The true reason for the flag's untimely fall was soon known. It was discovered that the German workman who had been entrusted with the erection of the flagstaff, while completing his final adjustments with the adze, had bungled. A mis-stroke and the sharp edge of the tool caught the flag-rope, severing it with the exception of one strand. The workman, after surveying the damage, came to the conclusion that it would be unnecessary to replace the rope; the remaining threads would be sufficiently strong to fulfil its purpose. And so it did until the wind became strong, when the strain of the flapping caused the final restraining strand to collapse. And so down came the flag. Naturally, upon finding out their error and the

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falsity of their accusation, nothing more was said. German officialdom never admits a mistake. We regained the use of the "Field" immediately. But the Fall of the German Flag constituted a topic for animated discussion for a considerable time.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *INDOOR ENTERTAINMENTS*

Outdoor recreation remained at a very low ebb for several weeks and indoor diversion was even more restricted. The conditions were far from conducive to merriment. The barracks were wrapped in darkness, not relieved by so much as a glimmer of light beyond the glow of a cigarette, or pipe, or the evanescent flicker of a match. The long winter evenings dragged with exasperating slowness, and the wonder is that the more dejected of the prisoners did not become demoralized from prolonged moping. They were querulous to an extreme degree; a man might be joking one minute and the next in a frenzy of bad temper.

The introduction of one or two candles relieved the gloom a great deal, and the most was made of the slender illumination thus afforded. When artificial lighting, even of

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the most primitive description was introduced, I tried to pass the evenings in some useful occupation. I kept a diary in which I carefully posted the happenings of each day. When I left Ruhleben this diary had to be left behind in compliance with the law which forbade the taking home of anything by those who were released; but the writing of it afforded me infinite delight. I purposely wrote the material over and over again in order to kill time, each successive effort being more elaborate than its predecessor; and I took huge pleasure in writing my final version in microscopical characters, crowding several hundred words on a sheet equal in size to the leaf of a reporter's notebook. On many an occasion I whiled away eight solid hours in this manner; and midnight invariably passed before I finished my self-appointed task. One night I just missed being hailed before the authorities for this heinous offense, such a narrow squeak that it gave me a terrific fright. My sheets of notes had become an inextricable tangle because I had forgotten to number them consecutively; and I rigged up a table and set the

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notes out to straighten them. I was deeply engaged in so doing when the door opened to admit the soldier on duty. The table was a sea of papers.

With one swift movement I swished the lot together, extinguished the light, and hopped into my bed. The sudden darkness discomfited the guard; he was as helpless as an owl in the glare of an electric torch and he dared not move for some minutes lest he stumble over a slumbering form. When he had regained his poise and had switched on his electric torch—every soldier on duty was thus equipped—he was baffled, for I was apparently as sound asleep as the rest of the prisoners. He had not been quick enough upon entering the room to make sure of my identity, but I think he must have had a pretty good idea that I was the culprit, for he gave me a rough kick. I started up, simulating a sleeper suddenly awakened from his dreams, blinked, rubbed my eyes and muttered something incoherent. The soldier eyed me narrowly, but evidently thrown off the scent by my affectation of rudely disturbed slumber, concluded that he

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had made a mistake, and after gruffly bidding me lie down again, shuffled off.

Those who were not disposed to emulate the birds of the air and repair to their bunks with the waning of the winter daylight, used to gather in the long corridor leading to the horse boxes. Here they lounged in the darkness, smoking, grumbling and relating sadly forced jokes.

One night, someone in the darkness shouted the suggestion that we have a "sing-song." Someone else routed out a small box and there was a call for volunteer talent. No response was forthcoming, for none of the prisoners felt in the mood to sing. Many calls were made and went unanswered. Finally one man timidly approached the box, mounted it, and commenced a sentimental lyric. It was a weak attempt, his voice was sadly off pitch, and the song itself was depressing, being one of the favorites of the homeland. Its recital aroused memories and the singer had not gone far before he was rudely interrupted and ordered to stop—he was twanging at heartstrings too wildly.

It would not have mattered how fine his

voice; the prisoners were not disposed to accept sentiment at any price. They wanted something rollicking, something with a good swing to it. The words were immaterial; indeed, some of the songs were the most inane ever sung or heard, but they went down like good red wine. There was one in particular that always raised the roof; I do not recall its title, but one line I shall never forget. It ran, "And the ghost walks underneath the floor!" That drew the crowd. It was always bawled forth with a roar that shook the barrack, and feet were stamped in accompaniment to the movements of the spook. That anything to do with bogey-men or eeriness should ever have made such a strong appeal to the dejected inmates of Ruhleben may seem somewhat remarkable, but the fact remains that it tickled the fancy more than anything else in our entire repertoire during those melancholy days.

One night when there was a lull in the entertainment, a prisoner shouted to a colleague, "Now then, B——! You can give us a turn. Out with it!"

B—— was unable to evade the unexpected

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invitation, and somewhat hesitatingly mounted the box. This prisoner had lived nearly all of his life in Germany, and in appearance and mannerisms bore a greater resemblance to the Hun than to the Briton. We awaited his turn with anticipation. He started, but he did not go far before pandemonium broke loose—he had the temerity to attempt a German song in the German tongue.

If ever an outrage was committed upon the Britishers in Ruhleben, this was one. The sound of the hated tongue roused the audience to frenzy; the box was rushed and the unfortunate soloist became the victim of an infuriated crowd. They hustled and pummelled him without mercy, and each blow only served to rouse the anger of the crowd to a higher pitch.

The sing-song which had commenced earlier in the evening free from incident threatened to develop into a riot. B——'s sympathizers and colleagues took part with him, and the fight was fast and furious, until the timely intervention of the guard dispersed us and brought the meeting to a sud-



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den end. Needless to say, after this incident, no prisoner ever made an attempt to render a song in German. It was more than his skin was worth.

Subsequently this man, on account of his outspoken sympathy with the German nation, was released upon condition that he join the German army. He did so and was drafted to the Western front, where a British bullet laid him low, paying the penalty for his treachery. When the news reached the camp it was received with great satisfaction and prompted an immediate choral rendition of "And his ghost walks underneath the floor." That was the only tribute considered fit for the occasion.

One evening, the party lounging in the corridor decided to enliven things a little by an impromptu and exceedingly unskilled exhibition of clog dancing. Our shoes had stiff wooden soles, and the patter of several dozen feet thus encased made a noise like trip hammers. This the guards declined to tolerate, and we were abruptly cleared out. At that time our captors resented all of our efforts to liven the weary hours. Their one

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aim seemed to be to keep us dejected, but they found this impossible, for we had grimly determined to get some fun out of our drab imprisonment. To attempt to suppress the spirit of some of the prisoners was like trying to extinguish a fire with petrol, and unconsciously the guards themselves contributed to our amusements. They stopped our singing in the corridors, by ordering us to move on. They suddenly discovered that congregating in the passageway constituted an infringement of the regulation forbidding prisoners to collect in groups.

At the time I arrived, the camp did not possess a single musical instrument; or, at least, although some of the prisoners owned them, they were safely stored away, owing to lack of facilities for practice. For instance, when Godfrey Ludlow, the Australian violinist, was trapped in the internment net he succeeded in securing permission to take with him his violin, but for months he scarcely touched it. Indeed, he seldom removed it from its case, except to reassure himself that it was not suffering from its

prolonged inactivity and enforced storage in uncongenial quarters.

But one night the gloom was broken by strains of a musical instrument. The lover of music may perhaps cavil at the term being applied to a mouth organ or a Jew's harp! I forget which of these two instruments of torture had the distinction of being heard first at Ruhleben. As soon as the strains arose there was an outbreak of jubilation—at last we had secured an accompaniment for the vocalists who entertained the community. As for the instrumental solos, they threw us into ecstasies of delight, especially the negroes, who were hilarious in their joy. I recall how the prisoners crowded around the lucky possessor of the instrument, listening intently and urging him to keep going for all he was worth. A few weeks later, if we could have encountered the men who invented the Jew's harp and mouth organ, we would have torn them limb from limb. A veritable boom set in; they were purchased from a Berlin store, and from morning till night the camp was a racket of discord. The less competent the owner, the more industri-

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ous would be his practice. At times the air was thick with missiles flung at the heads of the offenders, but the players refused to be daunted.

The vogue did not last long, but it gave way to another and if possible, worse affliction. A prisoner succeeded in getting hold of a mandolin. Then two or three stray violins crept in, then a guitar, followed by whistle pipes which came by the dozen. It was not uncommon for twenty or thirty assorted instruments to be playing simultaneously in a barrack, each struggling with a different air.

If the auditors were in the minority they had to suffer in silence, stop their ears or get out. If they were in the majority they took the law into their own hands, and either drove the disturbers from their quarters or forced them to stop.

During those strenuous musical times many curious sights were witnessed in the camp. In the horse boxes the bunks were disposed in tiers, three on each side, resembling the sleeping quarters of a liner. I have

seen the occupants of three superimposed bunks sitting up, with their legs dangling over the sides, together in concert but not in harmony. The occupant of the top bunk might be playing "Rule Britannia," on a tin whistle; the man in the center trying valiantly to scrape out something like the melody of a Schumann nocturne on a violin; and the prisoner in the lowest bunk steeplechasing the strings of a guitar into the strains of "Come Back to Erin." Possibly, on the opposite side, the owner of a bunk would be sucking out "The Swanee River" on a mouth organ. At the table, two other inmates were likely to be trying to write letters or read in the midst of the unearthly noise.

Things came to such a pass that matters had to be settled by compromise. The solution was effective: all the musicians in a barrack were bundled into a small room at the end of the building and given complete freedom to play one against the other. For a few minutes Bedlam reigned. Then the door would open, and one musician, his instrument under his arm and his face red from

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his exertions, would emerge and slink disconsolately to his bunk. He had been defeated in the contest. Another, and then another, would retire in turn, until at last perhaps only three or four players would be left.

Even the coralling of the would-be musicians into one room was not entirely successful, as discordant strains have the knack of penetrating a good distance. So we decided to banish the orchestras from the barracks altogether. There was a small cubbyhole outside, into which a few instrumentalists could be crowded. They were given this retreat which did not meet with great appreciation. It was so small that the musicians had to stand back to back. We took a huge delight in chaining up the "mad musicians," even if the violinist did have to lean out of the window to play his instrument.

I was passing the practice room one day when a violinist was leaning out as usual. It was raining heavily and the instrument was dripping like an umbrella.

"Say, old man," I ventured to the player, "your violin's getting wet. Why don't you take it inside?"

"I can't," he said plaintively, letting up for a moment, "I can't turn around."

"Then why on earth don't you stop?"

"I can't," he repeated, "until someone goes out. I'm fixed here in a vice, and have to go on playing whether I like it or not!"

I left him battling with the rainstorm and his rebellious instrument, the soddened strings of which were playing strange capers.

Only one element in the camp appreciated the practice bouts—the "darkies." They would gather about in delight as they listened to the gurgles and hiccoughs of the instruments. Only those individuals, accustomed to finding pleasure in the banging of a tom-tom, were able to enjoy a *Ruhleben* band practice.

In striking contrast to the foregoing were the impromptu recitals to which we were occasionally treated by the "masters." Now and again Godfrey Ludlow would withdraw his treasured violin from its case, and in the silence of the loft or the horse box, settle down to play. As soon as the strains from his instrument were heard the prisoners

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within earshot would abandon their tasks, steal quietly into the building and listen in silent rapture. When he had finished a round of spirited applause would break out, accompanied by urgent entreaties for more. His music carried us completely away. The German soldiers also used to creep in and linger among the appreciative audience.

When the Communal Government came into existence it was decided to organize our indoor entertainments. There was ample talent in the camp, only requiring organization and efficient handling. We had already tried to relieve an evening's tedium by a comedy sketch, which had been written and presented by F. F——. I met this comedian in Sennelager Camp, and learned that he and his wife had been on the stage for years. They had been arrested while fulfilling a contract in Germany. One day, Mrs. F——, paid us a visit at Sennelager; but if there were one thing more than any other to which the authorities were opposed, it was the visits of women to internment camps. Mrs. F—— was seen by a soldier who reported her, and we were all paraded. Then the com-



manding officer, before us all, roundly lectured the woman in a most insulting manner and threatened her with severe punishment if she should ever visit the camp again. It made our blood boil to stand by and listen to his harangue, but we were helpless. The tears coursed down F——'s face as he listened and watched the despairing face of his wife. But both the poor woman and ourselves had to suffer in silence; the slightest movement on her behalf would have brought penalties indescribable upon us, and she would have been treated to further indignities.

F——'s attempt to provide us with theatrical fare was laughable. A small stage was rigged up in a hall under the grandstand, merely an apology, for a curtain was impossible and the properties were of the crudest description. But we thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment, and when we secured permission to run the camp ourselves, we turned the hall—for the use of which we paid £50—into a theatre, used it for orchestral and vocal concerts, and on Sundays for church services. We built a first-class stage, with

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every accessory, even to a plush drop curtain, which we bought in Berlin and made ourselves. Stage carpenters and scene painters were enrolled, and with these latter we were especially well equipped as there were several artists in camp. I doubt whether some of the drop scenes could be excelled for beauty in any bona fide theatre. One in particular aroused widespread comment. It represented months of constant labor on the part of the artist. It was essentially a labor of love with him, but he told me it was the only means by which he could keep his thoughts from home.

Those artists who did not share in the stagecraft preparations, designed costumes, posters and announcements. The latter were works of art, and will undoubtedly be highly prized among collectors of the future.

A stock company was established, and an advertisement for actors met with tremendous response. The prisoners applied *en masse*. The environs of the Ruhleben theatre in the early days recalled Poverty Corner in the heyday of its vogue. Many prisoners, who had scarcely ever before seen the inside

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of a theatre, blossomed out in true Bohemian fashion, and incidentally set a new vogue for the camp. The hair was set down at the accepted angle and style, the seedy hat was sported at the regulation tilt, big ties were seen everywhere—indeed, any chance visitor to Ruhleben might have been pardoned had he concluded that the Germans had rounded up not every Britisher within the Teuton Empire, but every actor under the sun and flung them into a common fold. The self-styled actors who suddenly overwhelmed us, regarded their position with all seriousness, and were impervious to the jokes which their appearance created. Fashion in Ruhleben decreed that one either had to be or look like an actor if he wished to be accepted in camp society.

A lean-to was built—as usual we paid for the materials and labor—for rehearsals. This building grew with great rapidity in order to receive scene painters and stage properties. In the meantime, playwrights were busy preparing the initial plays, and here, also, real talent was discovered. Specially prepared works were supplemented by per-

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formances of the popular favorites of the homeland, the necessary permission to render which was always granted by the owners of the copyright. Drama, comedy, sketch, musical comedy and comic opera were given in turn, for our play bill-of-fare was arranged to suit all tastes.

The bill was changed twice a week. The prices for the seats were low, sixpence and one penny, with a few reserved seats at higher prices. The performances started at half past six and ended about a quarter after eight, as the regulation was that we be in our barracks by half past eight. On one or two occasions, during the regime of Baron Scherein, we were permitted to close at a later hour, but these exceptions were reluctantly granted. From the very first, the theatre proved a great success, and was more than self-supporting. A certain percentage of the revenue went toward new properties and costumes, while contributions were also made towards the purchase of foodstuffs, which enabled our colleagues to buy little dainties and luxuries at figures below the prevailing prices.

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While the first musical efforts were not a success, it was not long before the managers succeeded in organizing a real orchestra for which another lean-to was built. The concerts, both instrumental and vocal, vied with the theatre in popular favor. Ambitious works of every description were rendered, and upon notable occasions, the Governor, accompanied by his wife and a few privileged friends from Berlin, was among the audience. The visitors were most enthusiastic, and on more than one occasion, they declared that we had treated them to an evening's enjoyment that could not have been surpassed in any German center of music.

Although the orchestra usually gave indoor concerts, musicales were held out of doors during the brief summer season when the weather was insufferably hot. This was a diversion we enjoyed hugely, for it reminded us of home. The stretch before the grandstand constituted the promenade, where we strolled listening to the band, or reclined upon the grass. Many delightful evenings were passed in this manner, and at

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such times we almost forgot that we were penned up in a German internment camp.

In our wish to preserve the associations of home, we celebrated our own Royal Academy exhibition. There was plenty of talent in the camp, and the exhibition proved a great success. Many of the canvasses displayed compared favorably with some I have seen on the line in Burlington House; and in addition, there were examples of artistry and craftsmanship. Some of the prisoners had passed their idle hours in wood-carving with penknives and other simple tools. One if the negroes had laboriously fashioned pieces of granite into knickknacks of various sorts, finished with a high polish. These aroused considerable comment. My contribution to the exhibition was an egg emblazoned with the arms of Ruhleben and a suitable inscription. After the exhibition, I used it as a drawing card in the window of a shop I established in Ruhleben, where it never failed to arouse interest, even among the German officers.

We considered our ring of indoor amusements completed when at last we were able

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to open the Picture Palace, which proved a success. Our principal trouble in this connection was with films. We had to hire these from Berlin, and most of them were execrable in character, plot and technique, while the fact that they were terribly worn by the time we received them did not add to their attractions. But we consoled ourselves with the fact that the Germans had lagged far behind the other nations in this phase of industry.

All things considered, it must be admitted that the internment camp was well supplied in point of indoor amusements. There was always something on that served to while away the tedium of the evenings and did much toward promoting the limited gaiety of the prisoners.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *BIDS FOR FREEDOM*

People at home, reading about the congested internment camp at Ruhleben, often wonder why frequent attempts at escape are not made. Now and again we hear of such a venture and some prisoner more daring than his fellows straggles home, having bid an unofficial adieu to the Teutons.

There were several reasons why such breaks for freedom was seldom made. In the first place, there was hardly a prisoner who did not believe that release was only the matter of a short time; only a few of the prisoners could speak German; and then it was a long pull from Spandau to the border, and subsistence en route was likely to prove difficult. As a result, reflection generally convinced the most daring that the risk was hardly worth the candle. Of a certainty, re-



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capture would be attended by punishment of some devilish description such as only the Teuton mind could conceive.

Spies abounded everywhere, and we had to bear in mind that we were not likely to encounter many benevolent Germans on our way to the frontier. A prisoner in flight could hardly hope to escape the inevitable challenge that sooner or later would be flung at him during his journey. Demand for the pass would lead to a complete undoing. Even if a man tried to pass himself off as an American, he could scarcely hope to succeed, for Americans also had to produce passports or other irrefutable evidence of American citizenship.

Accordingly, during the first three months of our imprisonment no attempt at escape is recorded. During this period, however, one or two of the more venturesome kept their eyes and ears open, and acquainted themselves with the lie of the land, in case an opportunity should arise.

As time went on, and less was heard of the expected change of prisoners, those who were willing to take any risk to get away,

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matured their plans. I may say that "How to Bolt" and "When to Bolt" were the favorite subjects for discussion in the privacy of our living quarters. Hundreds talked glibly and evolved daring schemes, but few of them were carried out. As a rule, the schemer thought better of his decision when the moment arrived. Nevertheless, rumors of escape were bandied about without cessation.

We always knew when a bold break for freedom had been made. Then we were called to parade at six in the morning. We were not even given time to dress, but had to jump up out of bed and appear as we were, snatching overcoats on the way. When the weather was cold it was a disagreeable ordeal, but there was not a man among us who did not wish the fugitive success and gladly shoulder personal discomfort on his behalf. We knew that every minute we could give him was invaluable so we delayed and hampered the authorities as much as possible in their efforts to count us.

Escape was not without its tragic side. One Russian prisoner, a mere boy, fell a vic-

tim to the irksomeness of confinement, and his brain gave way. In his delirium he attempted to escape. He was detected by the guard, who uttered the challenge but apparently the youth's mind was so unhinged that he did not realize the import of the ominous hail. Crack went the rifle. His body, stiff and cold, was brought into the camp the next morning. The guard had undoubtedly taken deliberate aim, instead of contenting himself with merely bringing him to earth. We considered it a cold-blooded murder.

The fact that we knew but little of the guarding of the camp from without baffled our efforts to break bounds. We discreetly sounded our guards when we became more friendly with them, kept our eyes open, and never allowed the slightest detail to escape our eyes. We learned, however, that the protective system was uncannily elaborate. The soldiers were exasperatingly vigilant and ready to shoot on sight. Also every night, at half past nine, a barrack inspection was carefully made, when the guard entered and counted the inmates. If the total tal-

lied with his official record, it was acknowledged by a guttural "*Gute Nacht.*" If not, there was a hubub until the roll was found to be correct.

Escape in the daytime was utterly impossible, although in one instance it came within an ace of proving successful, through sheer audacity. The prisoner laughingly entered his barrack one day, and commenced to pack his bag. His comrades asked what was in the wind.

"Oh, I've had enough of this. I'm going to clear out," was the reply.

His listeners were so utterly taken aback by his retort that they stared at him in open-mouthed astonishment. Then, as the import of his words dawned on them, they shook their heads and tapped their foreheads in gentle conviction that another man's brain had given way. Yet there was method in this man's madness. He emerged from his barrack, still laughing merrily, yelled "good-bye" to those who were loitering around and waved his hand excitedly in general farewell. Then he hastened toward the entrance where

the guard watched the man's approach closely.

The prisoner marched boldly up to the guard, extended his hand and laughingly said that he was off, having been granted a pass. The soldier was so over-awed by the frankness of the prisoner that he wished him good-bye and allowed him to go without making the slightest protest. It was some seconds before the guard realized that he had not asked to see the man's pass; then the prisoner was quickly hailed and ordered to stop. Of course, his game was up and he was promptly taken into custody. What ultimately became of him I do not know, but the general belief was that he was committed to an asylum after escort to Spandau, the authorities concluding that no man in his right senses would ever have attempted such a rash ruse. His nerve aroused widespread comment and satisfaction among the prisoners.

What audacity can do was shown on another occasion as well. When Mr. Geoffrey Pyke came to the conclusion that he preferred life in England to that in an intern-

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ment camp in Germany, he did about the last thing a fugitive would be expected to do.

He and a companion successfully broke bounds and turned their footsteps toward the North Sea. Some four hundred miles lay before them, and they almost covered the distance. Under their plan, they did not hurry nor did they cling to the solitude of the countryside, but walked boldly through the various towns en route during broad daylight. By this procedure they evidently disarmed the suspicions of the authorities; and the two drove their way as far as Wesel, where their elation at their success led to their undoing. They had paraded every other town on their way and they concluded that they might just as well see the sights of Wesel. But Wesel, being a military area, is difficult to enter and even more difficult to leave; and every stranger is watched as closely as a mouse is watched by a cat. As they were walking unconcernedly along the street one day they were challenged and all was up. So ended their daring enterprise.

Needless to say, attempt at escape constituted the most heinous offence in the whole

penal code at Ruhleben and the punishment was accordingly severe. At the parades following such attempts we were mercilessly harangued. The officials dinned it into our ears that the runaway was either within an ace of being caught, or actually arrested, or else hinted in sinister terms that he had met with the fate which must inevitably attend all such efforts. Never did they admit that an attempt had been successful. Yet these threats and warnings had little effect on us. When a man disappeared from camp, and days passed without his return, the authorities endeavored to make us believe that he had been shot or encountered the worse fate of solitary confinement. They scouted the idea of any man ever succeeding in escaping from Germany, even if he broke the bounds of the internment camp.

As we came at length to appreciate the extremely elaborate arrangements for keeping us within the four walls of Ruhleben, we realized that the greatest skill was necessary to outwit our captors. It was about the middle of 1915 that the possibility of escaping first gained our serious attention.

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At a certain hour of the day the more daring members of the camp used to meet to discuss plans and projects, and to draw up certain laws bearing upon the subject which we all agreed to observe. One of the most keenly discussed topics was whether summer or winter constituted the best time for making the break for home. The pros and cons were all thrashed out thoroughly. Some argued that the shortness of the winter days and the long hours of darkness would be extremely favorable. But others thought that the extreme cold and the nakedness of the country would more than counterbalance this advantage.

The supporters of the summer theory counted on the hiding places offered by the cornfields and the foliage of the woods and hedges, which would make it easy to sleep all day and travel by night. Lastly, and this was a telling factor, it would be possible to subsist longer without food in warm weather than in the bitter cold. It was the consensus of opinion finally that the summer was the better time.

The meetings of the little society were



much attended and many rules were laid down. For instance, if two prisoners were to break loose at the same time, they were to keep company if possible, but each was to act in accordance with the law of self-preservation. That is to say, if one met with an accident, or was wounded by a sentry's rifle, his comrade was to go on without rendering him assistance.

The period of darkness during which an attempt could be made was from half past nine at night to six in the morning. It was the habit of the guard to make an inspection the last thing at night. At first, this seemed to constitute a serious obstacle, but we overcame it by a little strategy, or what might be aptly called camouflage. A plotter would proceed to his barrack and make up his bed as if he were asleep in it. A convenient bundle was slipped under the cover to represent the form of the sleeper, or perhaps a pair of boots were left projecting from the foot of the bed. These preliminary arrangements were voted necessary to absolve one's comrades from all complicity.

This ruse succeeded until it dawned upon

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the authorities that the guard ought to make a bunk to bunk inspection. Of course, directly this system came into operation, the dummy forms were speedily discovered, with the result that the fugitive did not get a very long start before his flight was discovered. It was also an unwritten law that no prisoner should ever communicate his intentions to any one unless he were to be accompanied, in which case, of course, he had to act in concert with his colleague. The prisoners never showed the slightest curiosity in matters pertaining to escape beyond fervently wishing good luck to the fugitive.

I had several plans for escape, but because of the charge overhanging my head—that of being a spy in the pay of the British Government, from which I have never been acquitted—I had to move warily.

I did succeed in completing a carefully worked out scheme that seemed to offer every promise of success. I mapped out a route between the camp and the frontier, which extended entirely through sparsely occupied country. I intended to pass as a touring German cyclist, and went so far as actu-

ally to secure the bicycle. I also arranged for the fabrication and supply of a metallic bullet-proof garment to be worn beneath my ordinary clothing. I am a pretty good cyclist, and I had made up my mind that when challenged, I would either run the soldier down or fly past him at full speed trusting to the swiftness of my flight to prevent him from hitting me, or in the event of his bullet reaching its mark, hoping that it would be deflected by my metallic protection.

I completed all the arrangements down to the most minute detail. How, I am not at liberty to disclose, especially in connection with the cycle and the metallic protection for my person. They were to be at a certain place near Ruhleben at a certain time upon the day when I planned my departure, and they were there as arranged although I abandoned my effort at the last moment, for I discovered an insuperable flaw in my designs. The route I had so carefully planned I found to be the longest to the frontier, and would force me to cross two bridges. My accomplice outside warned me that I could never hope to "fly" these. Not only

were they heavily guarded by a detachment of soldiers, but each end had a barrier that could be dropped at a moment's notice. If I succeeded in eluding the guard at one end, the barrier could be closed at the other before I reached it. So I reluctantly abandoned the idea as hopeless and decided to possess my soul in patience until I was able to put a bolder and more complete scheme into execution.

The arrangements for protecting the exterior of the camp were extensive. This I discovered from personal investigation, taking my life in my hands to satisfy myself on this subject. I committed everything to memory so thoroughly that I could have made my way out and have traveled through the surrounding country blindfolded. From my examination I recognized the utter futility of trying to get away unless one had completed the most detailed arrangements and was equipped with resources for any emergency.

One industrious prisoner tried to escape by tunnelling under a brick wall bounding one side of the camp, the outer defences being

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the ubiquitous barbed wire. But the authorities had anticipated such an attempt. A deep trench had been dug in which were strung lines of barbed wire and the trench had then been filled in to conceal the obstruction. Consequently, any tunnelling, unless carried out at a very deep level, was completely frustrated. It was reported, too, that this barbed wire was connected with an electric alarm system, but upon this point I have no confirmatory evidence. Generally speaking, tunnelling was considered too fantastic and was not given serious consideration.

Although many attempts at escape were undoubtedly made, little information concerning them leaked out. Naturally, the participants maintained a wise silence. But one enterprise is worthy of mention. Two prisoners were involved whom I shall call A and B. Here is the story as narrated to me by A.

"The night was dark. Shortly after the guard had made his final inspection we tumbled out of our bunks, making them up to appear as if we were still sleeping, and

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stole out of the barracks. We lived in different parts of the camp, but our rendezvous had been arranged.

"After much anxiety we cleared the camp, and it looked like plain sailing; but we had gone only a short distance when my chum, overwhelmed at outwitting the guard and tasting freedom again, broke down completely. I was overcome with dismay. The force of the reaction reduced him to the helplessness of a baby. So occupied was I in trying to calm him and restore him to his normal vigor that I failed to notice the approach of the sentry. He called his challenge from the distance of a dozen paces.

"At the sound of this peremptory order my friend's nerve returned. His first impulse was to run for it.

" 'Don't you move, you fool,' I growled quietly. 'If you do, he'll fire. You speak German, so bluff it through!'

"The sentry had reached us by this time and was eyeing us narrowly. My friend at last sputtered out something that we could see was regarded with suspicion. I now threw discretion to the winds, and jumping

forward dealt the sentry a terrific blow in the face that knocked him over like a ninepin.

“ ‘Run like Old Nick,’ I yelled to B, ‘and keep close to me.’

“We bounded forth, leaving the German soldier senseless on the ground. But luck was against us—we had gone only a few paces when my chum stumbled and fell, crying sharply as he hit the ground.

“ ‘Go on,’ he cried, ‘don’t stop.’

“This was in keeping with our secret code, but I knew the consequences if he were arrested, since the gravity of our offense had been augmented by the attack on the soldier. This would certainly be visited upon B. By this time the guard was yelling for assistance like one bereft.

“I doubled back to my companion. Luckily, all through the incident I managed to keep my senses, and I don’t believe I have ever thought so swiftly or so clearly as I did that night. Lifting B to his feet I found that he had only wrenched his ankle slightly. Crouching, I whispered softly:

“ ‘It’s hopeless now; we must get back to camp!’

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"We looked around. It was black as pitch, but our eyes, accustomed to the darkness, could make out the burly form of a soldier listening intently. Like two rabbits we bounded back toward the camp. The soldier immediately caught sight of us and tore after us like mad. We continued to run at top speed, but camp food told its tale, and we were both soon winded, so we dropped into the hollow formed by the bank, and stifling our heavy breathing as much as we could listened to the running of the sentry. The footsteps grew fainter and then died away.

"Thinking, of course, that the soldier had gone on, we looked around warily. Imagine our dismay, then, when we saw the figure of the guard on the bank above us silhouetted against the sky. He could not see us but was merely taking stock from his point of vantage. We crouched low, eager for the moment when he would move on, but he was not disposed to budge a foot.

"We stood the trying ordeal for what seemed an eternity, and then I whispered:

" 'There's nothing in this. We've got to



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go for him and take that rifle away. If we don't our number's up, for he'll blaze away the moment he sees us.'

"My companion gave a smothered curse at our dilemma. We were two puny scraps of half-starved humanity, while he was a big hulking Prussian guardsman with the strength of an ox.

" 'I'm game,' whispered my chum, 'but he's big enough to eat us.'

" 'Never mind. We're two to one, and it's our only chance. Are you ready?'

"We crawled up the bank without being seen; reaching the top we sprang on our prey like tigers. There was a wild scuffle. I don't remember exactly what happened, but I know we hit out simultaneously, bore down the guard and threw away his rifle, and then bolted without ceremony for the point of the camp from which we had broken out. I received a sprained wrist and a damaged eye in the transaction and B also carried his scars.

"In the darkness we overshot the mark, and found our feet hitting the highroad that skirts one side of the camp leading to the

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main entrance. We were running full tilt into trouble, for the guards were all on the *qui vive* by this time. Hanging closely together, we dodged the chasing soldiers who were pelting down the road towards their comrades at the main entrance, whooping in confidence at the prospect of our capture. Whipping back, we discovered the point where we had broken bounds, clambered through and scuttled into our barracks.

"I tumbled into bed just in the nick of time, for directly after, the emergency bell began to clang, and the barrack guard rushed in excitedly, ordering everyone up. Cursing their luck, the sleepers rolled out of their beds, snatching what garments they could, and ran downstairs. I discarded a part of my attire and made myself look as disheveled as I could to give the impression that I had just been awakened; but was upset to discover my wrist which had been painning me greatly had swollen to twice its normal size. For a moment I thought that this would certainly betray me.

"I was in the lap of the gods. I would fabricate some plausible explanation. As I de-

scended the staircase my thoughts flew to my chum. Had he regained his barrack or had he been caught at the last stile?

"As we fell in, my heart bounded, for I saw him polling toward the parade ground as nonchalantly as if nothing had happened, talking gaily with a companion. We were quickly counted, and the roll call was correct—and yet, two prisoners had escaped. We were counted and recounted, but the total never varied. How I chuckled inwardly at their discomfiture! At last we were dismissed, but I could see that the authorities were far from being satisfied; there was ample evidence to prove that two prisoners had broken away in spite of the fact that all were there.

"To complete my alibi I purposely slipped as we filed into the barracks and gave a sharp cry as I fell on my damaged arm and bumped my head. At last I felt secure. If personal inspection revealed my swollen wrist and damaged eye, explanation would be simple and I had plenty of witnesses. Nevertheless, I was at the water tap at the first opportunity, bathing my wrist and trying to reduce

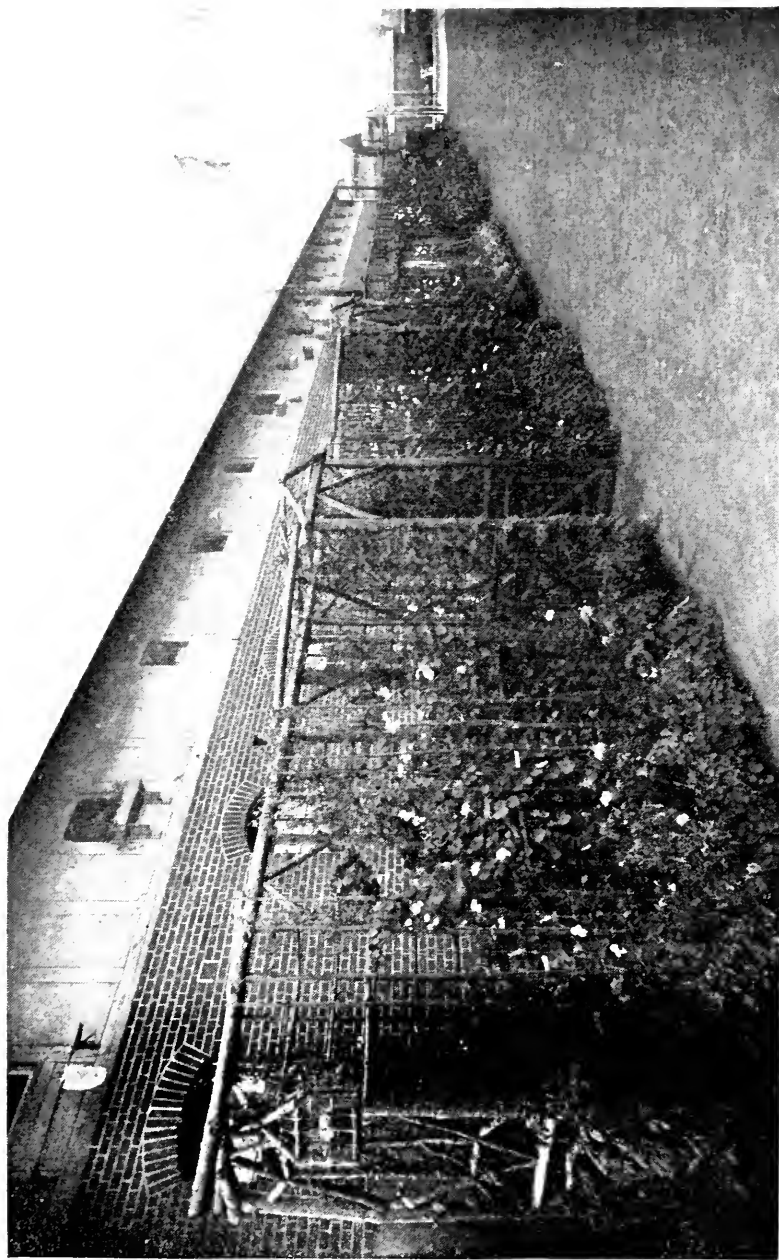
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the swelling of my eye. The commiseration of my colleagues was genuine, for they never dreamed of my unblushing dissimulation."

The German officials never solved the mystery, and A and B must be counted among the lucky ones. Others were far from being so fortunate.

The Teutons lost no opportunity to impress upon us the severity of the punishment that awaited those who attempted to break bounds; and it must not be thought that their threats were empty ones—that was not the German way.

Let me illustrate by relating the case of one unfortunate runaway who was caught. The offender was at once condemned to solitary confinement; and we had almost forgotten about this unlucky comrade when we received a sudden shock. We were proceeding one morning to the kitchen for our morning meal when attention was arrested by the figure of a man standing alone in a conspicuous place, or rather what should have been a man. His face had a haunting pallor as of faded parchment, his eyes were lusterless, and he appeared to have scarcely enough



### THE LATEST ACHIEVEMENT IN RUHLBEN.

The boys worked long and hard to cultivate gardens to make their crude horse boxes look more homely. The windows above show the lofts, the height from floor to roof where we slept being 3 ft. 6 in.



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strength to stand. The pathetic spectacle he presented made an impression that will never be forgotten.

We soon found out it was the British prisoner who had attempted escape and been caught in the act. He had been brought from his solitude in a tiny steel-bound, dimly lighted room, as silent as the grave, to be exhibited before his compatriots as a warning. The horrors of solitary confinement had left their traces as we could all see for ourselves, and we were informed that similar punishment would be dealt out to all others who essayed the same offence. After this nauseating exhibition,\* the man was escorted back to the living hell in which he was to remain until the end of the war.

Once again, the Germans in their misunderstanding of the psychology of the British Anglo-Saxon committed a grave error. If they had hoped to intimidate the rest of the prisoners they were doomed to disappointment, for it had a diametrically opposite effect. This inhuman exhibition of a man whose only crime had been a bold dash for

\* "Sixteen Months in Four German Prisons," pp. 44-59.

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liberty provoked greater determination than ever on the part of the daring, and swelled the ranks of the secret society pledged to one definite object—freedom! No matter how, but freedom.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### *THE SPLIT IN THE CAMP*

I have already described how the German Government rounded up for internment, resident, commercial and touring Britishers without discrimination. Into this drag net were gathered English travelers and holiday-seekers, as well as those long resident in Germany, who from lengthy association with Teutonic influences had suffered a strange and almost incredible transformation. This element, instead of being compatriots, were a race apart; they were Germans in everything but birth and name.

It is true that in the aggregate they numbered only three or four hundred, but even this ten per cent. leavening was almost more than we could tolerate. They were openly sympathetic to the Teuton cause, and antagonistic to the British. This galled us to

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the quick. It demanded strong self control on the part of the loyal faction to listen to these cheer the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other outrages.

To exasperate us further, they inscribed German house-names on the doors of the horse boxes in which they lived, conversed in German, sang in German, observed all German fete days and celebrations in German fashion. In short, they existed as a German colony in the heart of a fervently patriotic settlement of Englishmen, and spared no effort to flout the flag of their birth. It seems incredible, but I am not exaggerating when I say that an English word never fell from their lips, except in opprobrium, or when they were compelled to converse with some of their fellow-prisoners. Indeed, in many instances, they had become so thoroughly Germanized as to speak imperfect English with a guttural accent.

Of course, the reason for this display of German sympathy was obvious. They were striving might and main to curry favor with the authorities, cherishing the hope that by such action they might ultimately gain free-

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dom or release "on pass;" and so be able to resume their commercial and professional occupations. We took the full measure of these creatures and so did the authorities, who detested the British, but seemed to have still greater contempt for those who disloyally renounced their citizenship and masqueraded as Germans.

The authorities distributed these renegade Englishmen promiscuously throughout the camp, but they invariably congregated to discuss in the vernacular the latest tidbits of news. Upon the approach of a loyal Britisher, however, conversation was discreetly dropped.

It was the general belief that the authorities planted these traitors among us for the purpose of listening to our conversation and acting as general intelligence couriers. How correct this is, I do not know, but I can vouch for the fact that these considered no task too low which was likely to redound to their advantage. If a comment adverse to Germany were uttered it was surprising how quickly the authorities knew of it, and indiscreet actions, conducted in apparent privacy,

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likewise reached their ears with amazing rapidity.

Consequently, we regarded these pseudo-Britishers with suspicion and made it clear to them that their company was not desired. Nevertheless, with apparent indifference, they participated in our conversations whenever possible.

During one of these, I remember, the name of the German Emperor happened to be mentioned. One of the loyalists suddenly broke in with:

“To hell with the Kaiser!”

A few minutes later the prisoner was hailed before the officials for the grave crime of *lese-majeste*. As he was being cross-examined, his eyes lighted on the traitor whom he recalled as being present when he consigned His Imperial Majesty to the lower regions. But the spy was not abashed; he unblushingly repeated his accusation, and the charge being proven, the man was promptly consigned to the camp jail for a term of three weeks. Upon the announcement of the sentence, ominous threats were heard. The crowd did not hesitate to ex-

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press the particular forms of vengeance it would visit on the renegade, who, apprehensive of the future, besought the authorities for protection. The officials gravely warned him that if the informer were threatened or molested in any way, the most drastic punishment would be meted out.

One day we were paraded and commanded to take the straw from the sacks serving us as mattresses. We learned in a roundabout way that the straw was to be sent to the mills to be ground as a constituent for our war bread. After we had followed instructions, we were escorted to a pile of wooden shavings and ordered to fill our sacks. Those first at the heap secured the most inviting shavings, but in the wild good-natured struggle that ensued much of the material became soiled from dirty boots.

Moreover, we discovered that the shavings were in a deplorably wet condition. There was an outburst of indignation, but we made the best of the situation by emptying the sacks upon the ground in hopes that the sun would dry out the shavings.

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I had a forbidden instrument, a camera, concealed upon my person, and it was my constant companion. The spectacle of the mattress shavings upon the ground suggested to my mind a picture of the way in which Germans looked after British prisoners, and so, click went the shutter. Looking up suddenly, the moment after the snapshot had been made, I caught sight of one of the renegade Britishers watching me narrowly. I saw that I had been detected; and pretending to ignore him as I moved away I kept him in the corner of my eye. I saw him approach one of the guards and talk with him, pointing in my direction. The soldier turned, followed me, for I had begun to move away, and hailed me, but I took no notice. I quickened my step and he did likewise. Then he started to run. So did I. With my brain working rapidly I dodged around the corner of a barrack with him in hot pursuit. How could I get rid of the incriminating camera? As I dived through one of the buildings I was seized with a sudden inspiration. Near by was a latrine and into it I darted like lightning. Seizing a sheet of paper I wrapped the

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camera in it and threw the obscure parcel into the pit.

Up came the soldier with my accuser at his heels. The soldier rattled out a tirade in German which I pretended not to understand. I opened my eyes wide, shook my head to signify lack of comprehension, and remarked, "Sorry, I do not understand German."

A comrade who happened to be standing by, turned to me and said, "The soldier says you have been taking photographs in camp."

"Yes," babbled my excited accuser, "I saw him take a peek-ture."

"What," I roared, "I take a photograph! The man's mad."

But my accuser was persistent. Nor was the soldier to be put off. He told me curtly that I should have to go with him to the guardhouse.

"Certainly!" I answered. "We will. You have charged me with a very serious crime. Come along."

I seized the soldier's arm to pull him toward the guardroom.

My precipitancy had the desired effect.

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The soldier hesitated; he could not understand the situation. He realized that he might have been misinformed or perhaps have arrested the wrong person.

If the charge proved empty, he and not I would receive a rap over the knuckles. He turned to the man who had given me away and they had a spirited altercation. But my accuser was not to be denied.

"I tell you," he repeated, punctuating his words with his fist, "I saw him take the photograph. It was a peek-ture of the shav-eengs."

A crowd had collected and were enjoying the fun, guessing from my behavior that even if I were guilty I had outwitted my accuser. The fact that one of the hated members of the camp had been caught napping gave them immense delight.

I cut further discussion short by seizing the soldier and literally pulling him to the guardroom. The crowd followed and we burst into the office unceremoniously. There was surprise at our abrupt entrance, and a spirited confab ensued.

I demanded to see the Baron. The officials



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protested, but I emphasized the enormity of the charge against me, which if proved, exposed me to the risk of being shot, because I had originally been arrested and tried as a spy, and never acquitted. The officials grumblingly conceded and an interpreter was placed at my disposal.

I related my story, in feigned temper and protesting so vehemently as to provoke the smiles of the officer, but my accuser stuck to his guns. The officer, presuming that a search of my person had been made and no incriminating evidence found, was disposed to dismiss the charge with a wave of his hand. But I now had my chance to complete the discomfiture of the despicable informer who was seeking so diligently for crumbs of favor from the tables of officialdom. I insisted that I should be searched. To satisfy me, a perfunctory examination was carried out, officials running their hands lightly over my pockets. But this was not good enough for me. Taking off my coat and vest, I insisted upon a more thorough search, one conducted in the usual German manner.

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Of course, it was barren of result. My accuser, now thoroughly discredited, looked about as happy as a whipped dog; and the soldier who had acted sincerely in accordance with his duty, feeling he had been fooled, turned upon his erstwhile ally and treated him to a detailed description of himself that was more forcible than elegant.

With my honorable discharge, I considered the incident closed, but my colleagues considered the time a psychological one to extract some satisfaction for the past miseries they had suffered at the hands of these spying gentry. So late that night, a crowd of Britishers made their way cautiously to the barrack where the traitor was quartered in a horse box with five other British prisoners.

My blood was thoroughly up, but the man refused my challenge to fight. The occupants of the box were in a quandary. They hesitated to pitch their fellow tenant out for fear he would go to the officials; on the other hand they could scarcely side with him openly.

The tumult was now sufficient to arouse the soldier on duty who came up. But he

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was informed that we were going to settle this matter among ourselves. That a man who called himself an Englishman and betrayed a companion in order to curry favor with the authorities could not escape punishment whatever happened. The soldier listened, and then turning on his heel, said: "Very well, but I shall not see it," and stumped off to his room. This action was eloquent of the guard's opinion of this kind of ally. There was a lively set-to and the man received the drubbing he deserved.

It was not long before every prisoner entertaining German sympathies became known to us; and we dubbed them pro-Germans, abbreviated to "P. G.'s." It was impossible to hurl a worse epithet than "P. G." at a man.

Subsequently a change was made, either because the authorities had gathered all the information they desired through the "P. G.'s" or because they feared that the hatred between the two factions would result in rioting. All the prisoners were summoned to parade.

Having fallen in, the officer bellowed:

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"All those having German sympathies stand forward."

The majority of the prisoners, taking but little interest in the proceedings, and failing to listen very attentively, misunderstood the word sympathies for interests, as the latter was invariably asked on these occasions. Consequently, a large number of men stepped forward. Those of us who had heard aright could scarcely believe our eyes. We had expected the "P. G.'s" to answer the summons with alacrity but here were many men whose loyalty had always been above suspicion. There was a pronounced hissing which took the mistaken men by surprise. Looking around at us and seeing our expressions they realized some mistake had been made, and one of them asked the officer to repeat the question. As he did so, our loyal comrades stepped back into ranks, at which there was suppressed cheering. They were unmercifully badgered afterward by the rest of the camp.

Our ranks once more solid, we concentrated our hissing upon the "P. G.'s" who re-

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ceived our hostility with smirks and gibes. When at last they were given the order to march to the racecourse for further instructions their delight knew no bounds. Their unswerving belief in Germanism was to receive its due reward. They were going to be released.

Two days later it was our turn to whoop with delight. We learned that upon reaching the parade ground, these pro-Germans received a rude awakening. After being lined up, the officer in command advanced and said abruptly:

"How many of those present are prepared to join the German army?"

The "P. G.'s" were stunned. This was something for which they had not bargained. Their enthusiasm for the German cause slumped heavily.

I do not know who regarded the backsliders with greater contempt—the German officials or ourselves.

I do not think the authorities secured many recruits for the Imperial Army. At all events, barely a handful apparently step-

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ped forward from the ranks to buy release at such a price.

But that parade was of benefit to us—it revealed our enemies. They had declared their sympathies openly. The feeling against them became more embittered than ever. The wonder is that open fighting did not occur.

The authorities were quick to grasp the state of affairs; and concluded that it was preferable to remove the bone of contention. Accordingly the "P. G.'s" were again paraded, and lock, stock and barrel were transferred to a separate part of the camp.

But herding the "P. G.'s" together was not without its disadvantages, for newly arriving British prisoners were invariably assigned to these quarters and consequently found themselves avoided by the rest of the camp.

One may ask why the newly-arriving loyalists did not change their quarters at the first opportunity? Needless to say, many did so, but changing quarters was discouraged. It would have played havoc with our organization, and the discontented would

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have been eternally upon the move. However, the matter could generally be adjusted in another way. The residents of a friendly barrack, having extra room, would offer to take in a new arrival of loyalist tendencies. In such instances the man made a moonlight flit. If this were impossible, he had to grin and bear it.

I do not think there were any depths of infamy to which these men were not ready to descend. When the British Prisoners' Relief Fund was inaugurated, whereby a sum of five shillings—subsequently reduced—was paid through the American Embassy, the "P. G.'s" were the first to claim it. This fund was really launched to assist necessitous prisoners among us, but there were a very great number of the poorer members of the community, who, though in dire need, were too proud to accept it. The action savored too much of charity for their independent instincts. But the "P. G.'s" had no qualms in this connection. They polled up *en masse*, asked for it, and received it regularly. Among this coterie there were many who were well off, but even they did not

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hesitate to make application for the weekly payment, and openly chuckled about their success in this direction.

The circumstance that so-called Britishers, who had openly renounced their allegiance to the British cause, were weekly receiving money subscribed in Britain for the relief of the needy Britishers interned in Ruhleben, added to our disgust. The subject was discussed time after time, but we could do nothing. Nor could the American Embassy exercise any discretion. The representatives were merely distributing the money, doubtless in accordance with a carefully prepared list from home, the authors of which were obviously ignorant of the state of affairs. We might denounce the renegades as Teutons, but the German nation was not prepared to accept them as desirable citizens.

Their pandering to the Teuton officials was also nauseating. Whenever an officer passed, a "P. G.," no matter what he was doing at the moment, would come briskly to attention, and click his heels, impervious to the glance of withering scorn with which



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his boot-licking action was received by the officer.

Although we were starved as regards news of the outside world and the progress of the war, we always knew when a suppositious German victory had been achieved, for on such occasions the "P. G.'s" held wild jubilations. The culminating celebration was held on the occasion of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, when some of them cheered and all of them were hilarious. When we learned the cause of this wild mirth our blood boiled.

The "P. G.'s" remained in open hostility to the loyalists until the question of exchanging prisoners came to the fore and an avenue to freedom was opened. Then these treacherous wretches suddenly realized that all was not honey under the German flag and forthwith displayed undue readiness to seek the protection of the Union Jack.

Some succeeded in their petition and were included among the first batch of British prisoners to be released from Ruhleben. Considering their treachery and antagonism to everything British while interned, the public

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at home may possibly wonder how it was that they secured preference over the loyalist. But the authorities at home were either entirely ignorant or had only the slightest knowledge of the split in the camp; and they were without any key to the names of those of German sympathies, for we could not refer to the subject in our letters home.

One experience in the matter of exchange of prisoners is worthy of narration. The loyalist element in camp became disturbed by the receipt of news from England to the effect that one of the "P. G.'s," Guidal by name, who had been sent home a month previously, had secured an appointment in a south coast town. The details were too definite to be dismissed as mere rumor; among other things, his precise address was made known.

Our indignation knew no bounds, more especially when we recalled that this miserable traitor had been the most German among the pro-Germans, and had been unseemingly vociferous in the cheering which went up upon the sinking of the *Lusitania*. We were absolutely unable to intervene to secure a

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redress of this flagrant abuse of patriotism, as we were debarred from all mention of such incidents in our correspondence with home. A certain number of us however, met in conclave, and took a solemn pledge that the first of us to secure release should spare no effort to locate and denounce him.

As I was the first of the number to gain my freedom, the task of looking up this man and his activities devolved upon me. I commenced investigations, and learned that the man was not only occupying the position of tutor to English boys, but that he was on intimate terms with another master in the same school who was an out-and-out German and who was actually residing in a district prohibited to aliens.

While prosecuting my enquiries upon the spot, in the town of Worthing, I came face to face in the street with the despicable rascal. I eyed him rather narrowly to make certain that it was he, for proper food and clothing had made a vast difference in his appearance. His returning glance carried recognition, and I accosted him, remarking:

“Hullo! How are you?”

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He looked at me sheepishly, seeming half-disposed to disclaim the acquaintance, then realizing this was impossible, he replied with his characteristic deliberation:

"Oh! It's Mr. Ma-hone-ey."

I was not disarmed by his feigned surprise and tone of veiled welcome, but inquired what he had been doing since leaving Ruhleben.

Evidently convinced that I knew a good deal about his current activities, he resorted to a candor which was somewhat disconcerting. He admitted having secured a position as assistant in a school, said that he was doing well, was comfortable, and was among friends.

The information my inquiries yielded I handed over to a colleague identified with the British Empire Union. This friend made independent inquiries, and these investigations not only corroborated my story, but were graced with further details which were more than sufficient for our purpose. It was then decided to make a personal call upon this renegade, and my friend, accompanied by another loyalist,

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B——, who had been released from Ruhleben, proceeded to Worthing to have the matter thrashed out there and then. The returned prisoner B—— volunteered additional evidence of Guidal's behavior at Ruhleben if desired, the ultimate object being to notify the authorities of the presence of this highly dangerous individual in a south coast town.

But they were too late—upon arrival at Worthing they found both of their birds had flown. The two had evidently gained information that the authorities were on their trail. Ample evidence was forthcoming to establish the danger of Guidal being at liberty; his treachery and pro-German activities at Ruhleben were alone sufficient to prove that.

It is hard to think that such a wretch gained his freedom at the expense of some loyal sufferer who stuck to his flag through every test.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *TRADING IN RUHLEBEN*

Although for a few weeks Ruhleben might very aptly have been called "The City of Lost Souls" because of our absolutely aimless existence, it was not long before the commercial instinct asserted itself, and once felt, developed rapidly, the Britisher fully justifying his claim to the title of shopkeeper.

In the heyday of its prosperity Ruhleben was a thriving center. Many trades flourished, and the row of shops—called "canteens"—imparted a busy, town-like atmosphere to the colony. Bearing in mind that this prosperity was developed from the most meager material, it speaks volumes for the ingenuity and initiative of some of Ruhleben's inmates.

The cradle of Ruhleben commerce was Barrack 6, and it is scarcely necessary to say

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that it was the Hebrew element which started it. A number of Jewish prisoners commenced bartering among themselves, and the initial transactions were of the most primitive character—exchange of goods. But the articles available for such a system of trading were few in number and speedily traveled around the barrack. Those who were flush of funds promptly bought anything available for disposal, needless to say, at a ridiculous price, and got rid of the accumulated goods at prices that allowed wide margins of profit.

In the beginning, although trading had to be carried on secretly, the diversity of articles which could be secured through the Jewish tradesmen was startling. One thing is certain: they evidently evaded officialdom successfully and established trading relations with their co-religionists in Germany. You could get anything you might desire, no matter how extraordinary, through the Jewish barrack. Articles in universal demand were forthcoming immediately, while anything special was generally procurable within a few days.

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I was instrumental in emphasizing the trading enterprise of the Jewish prisoners to my horse box companions. To my mind "Lights Out" was sounded at an unearthly early hour. After a night or two the situation grew unbearable and I informed my companions of my intention to put in an hour or two's work after the sentry had looked us over for the night. I intimated that I was going out to buy some candles.

"Get some candles in Ruhleben," one of the men chuckled, "why, you might just as well try to walk home to England! Bet you a bob you don't get one!"

"All right," I retorted, "I'll bet you a bob I do!"

The wager was clinched and I sallied forth on what was put down as a hopeless shopping expedition. I made my way to the Jewish barrack and entered. Not being known to the inmates, who were very clan-nish, I was regarded with ill-concealed suspicion, and my discreet interrogations were received with an emphatic denial of all knowledge concerning a chandler. At last I espied a prisoner with whom I was on fairly



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intimate terms. I made known my request to him. He looked at me sideways.

"Do you want them for yourself?"

I nodded in assent.

He slipped away in the darkness. He was gone some time and I was almost beginning to think that my shilling was lost when I felt two candles slipped into my hand. I turned. It was my Jewish friend.

"Fourpence each," he said.

Clink went the money and I returned to my domicile proudly displaying my "forbidden" lights. I got the best of the deal, since the wagger paid for the candles and left me fourpence to the good.

The first open trading was conducted in Barrack 6. Tea, coffee and cocoa were unknown luxuries in those early days; we had only the official acorn beverage. One day, two or three of the Jewish prisoners came around with a steaming bucket of tea which they offered at a penny a cup. This miniature "A.B.C." proved a tremendous success, and the proprietors could not meet the demand. The bucket was used for a distressing variety of purposes, but we never

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thought of that. The steaming beverage was such a treat that it stifled all speculations.

This first company proved such a success that it aroused the envy of another group of Jewish traders, who decided to operate in opposition. The competition was hailed with delight, since it served to keep prices steady. Both the Ruhleben "A.B.C." and the "Lyons" tea-shops did a thriving business and must have proved financial successes. The walking coffee stalls by this time would doubtless have become huge businesses had they not been cut short by the initiation of self-government.

A third company launched out upon a different enterprise. It supplied eatables—not in variety or plenty—but so appetizing as to render the scheme financially successful. They brought around small sandwiches, of the cheese variety for the most part, which they cleared out at from one penny to three-pence each. These sandwiches were small, and at times of doubtful quality, owing to fluctuations in the grade of raw materials, but coming as a distinct relief to the prevail-

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ing rations they were heartily received by those who had the wherewithal to pay.

The financial successes of the enterprising Jewish fraternity stimulated a youth in one of the other barracks to a commercial outbreak in another direction. He was only about fifteen years of age but as keen as a March wind, and had been serving on a ship as cabin boy when he was arrested while his vessel was lying in a German port. He decided to start off as a shoeblack and secretly secured some decrepit brushes and some blacking.

His venture came as a complete surprise. As we sauntered through the camp one morning we were astonished to see a shoeblack stand pitched at the corner of one of the barracks, with it's owner inviting everyone in lusty tones to have "boots cleaned." Probably for the first time since their arrest the prisoners realized the condition of their footwear. The shoeblack, with the paraphernalia of his trade displayed, revived memories of London, and the very operation of submitting to a boot-clean served to transport us in thought to the metropolis once

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more. Imagination went a long long way in Ruhleben.

Trade was brisk and continuous throughout the day, and his pockets were heavy when he returned to his barrack in the evening. His charges were distinctly of the town, and tips rained upon him as liberally as if he had, indeed, been back home. He became a familiar landmark, it being one of the accepted laws of the camp that a man was free to establish himself upon a certain spot in the public quarter and ply his trade unmolested so long as he desired. The original bootblack had not been on his pitch many days when a rival in trade appeared, followed by another, then another and another. They came in such rapid succession as to convey the impression that boot-cleaning in Ruhleben was the short cut to affluence, and the manner in which they vied for patronage was amusing and instructive. The pioneer was content with a humble box, but some of those who came later sought wealth rapidly by doing the work in style. They labored long and hard contriving comfortable easy chairs

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and upholstering them, the ultimate result being that the shoeblack's stand developed into a replica of the finest display of the American way of doing things in this field.

To take a shoe-shine upon Bond Street became as inseparable from the fashionable doings of Ruhleben as an equestrian spurt in the Rotten Row at home. The dude, cigar in mouth, would loll in affected style in the chair, idly regarding passers-by, and ignoring chaff and banter, while, perhaps, one of his loft-colleagues wrestled with his boots. As may be supposed, the chairs were preferred to the less pretentious boxes, and the shoeblacks who boasted only the latter had to content themselves with the less wealthy clientele of the camp whose patronage was far less steady and remunerative. In an effort to recapture the "smart set" the shoeboys embellished their boxes with many weird and attention-compelling signs executed in brass studs, and bold plates secured from home setting forth that "Peach Bloom Boot Polish" or "Night and Sparrow's Blacking" was superior to all others. But these

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efforts were of no avail and they gradually went out of business.

The youth who had started the enterprise was not a whit dismayed by the turn of events, but set to work on another scheme. Securing possession of odd pieces of canvas and coarse sacking, he cut them up into bags filled them with straw, and advertised pillows for sale. As pillows were at that time an unknown comfort at Ruhleben, he once more did a flourishing business, especially as no more straw could be obtained in camp, the authorities having carefully gathered every wisp upon which they could lay their hands. How and where the boy obtained his supply was more than we could find out; his first business venture had taught him the necessity of silence concerning his business methods and he carefully concealed his source of supply.

When ordinary commerce flagged in the camp as a result of communal trading, he still kept things going, although his periods of activity in any one line grew gradually briefer. One of the most remunerative spasms of this description was raffling five

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mark (five shillings) notes to the crowd. As a rule he persuaded from 80 to 100 men to have a go at a penny a time so that the occupation was highly profitable. He was ready to sell five-mark notes all day so long as he could rake in from 7s. to 8s. 6d. in pennies on each gamble. The plunge was off when the draw was not likely to exceed five shillings in the aggregate, the exchange of two sixpences for a shilling being sheer waste of time in his opinion. There were very few ventures upon which he embarked out of which he did not clear a handsome return. "Get in and out quickly before the novelty loses its pull" was his motto. The boy was candid. He was out to make as much money as he could. He had a mother at home, and she and her welfare were foremost in his thoughts.

Money was plentiful in Ruhleben Camp. I doubt if there is a town of similar size in any part of the world which could point to so much wealth. But the opportunities for spending it were severely restricted. One may, perhaps, wonder how such a state of affairs could prevail but it must be remem-

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bered that our ranks were drawn from every strata of society. We had one or two extremely wealthy individuals, a large sprinkling of others who were very well off, while a big proportion were drawn from the comfortably situated commercial class. A large percentage of these were in regular receipt of money from home.

When the camp settled down under communal government, a system of controlling the volume of money in circulation was introduced. The camp authorities decided that unlimited distribution and possession of money within the prison would exercise a disastrous effect, and accordingly, the government acted as bankers. Prisoners who received remittances in excess of a certain sum deposited them with the authorities and were permitted to draw regularly upon their accounts, although no weekly withdrawal was supposed to exceed ten shillings. The imposition of this rule insured the depositor having ample funds for immediate needs, and it could be exceeded if there were sufficient reason, as for example, the purchase of clothing or house equipment.



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This communal banking system offered protection against crime and, moreover, by restricting the spending capacity of the wealthier inmates maintained a more harmonious feeling in camp. Had the poorer residents seen a reckless expenditure of money on the part of the wealthy, resentment would have been inevitable, especially if the rich prisoners had been in the position to lay in large stocks of food because they had the cash to take advantage of the market. Credit was unknown in Ruhleben; the rich prisoner had to pay cash like his poorest confrere, and was unable to buy beyond the extent of the money in his pocket.

Yet, for some reason or other, many of these wealthier prisoners suffered from prolonged spasms of financial cramp, due in my opinion to their readiness to keep camp-trading going briskly. They certainly did not believe in hoarding their money, and free currency circulation naturally led to the social betterment of the camp, but their action had one inevitable result. Money-lending became an established occupation. So far as Ruhleben was concerned there was

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no or very little risk; the remittances came regularly and all debts were immediately discharged.

I myself practised money-lending on a small scale but charged no interest. I had set up as an engraver and jeweler and found my business highly profitable, but I was always apprehensive concerning the safety of my money. By lending it out in small amounts to various prisoners I virtually banked it. Moreover, I discovered money-lending to be an excellent stepping stone to the sale of jewelry, and I gradually established a clientele that I could notify as soon as I had a new line of goods of which to dispose. Thus, for instance, when I received a consignment of cigarettes which I had to clear up at once before the authorities confiscated them, I had only to let my patrons know that "coffin nails" were in stock, and I usually received sufficient orders to get rid of my stock immediately without going beyond this ring of customers.

When the commercial possibilities of the camp came to be realized every prisoner with an ounce of enterprise ventured into some

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field of activity, but the majority failed to stick to their jobs. After a few days, the occupation lost its interest and they were ready to sell out their remaining stocks at ridiculously low prices. Nearly every enterprise was apt to be a nine days' wonder; and the rolling stone had a glorious time. To-day it would be dealing in clothes; a week hence cobbling would be the craze, to give way in turn to tailoring or some other form of enterprise. Trade booms came and went in bewilderingly rapid succession, but few callings survived; and by the time the rush was over, more money had been lost than gained.

This cult of the "craze" was demonstrated in various directions, notably in connection with what might be termed the fashions. One morning one of the dons created consternation in the street by appearing with his hair neatly parted in the center and carefully plastered down on each side with a glossy finish. Immediately, every prisoner hastened back to his barrack to brush his hair in the same way. Parting in the center became the vogue: to abstain from the latest

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mode was to be ranked as a complete outsider in the camp. Then another leader of fashion conceived the idea of allowing his beard to grow. Everybody else did likewise. Later the clean-shaven craze came in, and beards vanished as if by magic. Then the moustache had a run, and so it went on. No fashion enjoyed a long vogue, with the exception, perhaps, of the beard, which was found to be an excellent protection to the face during the bitter winter weather. But such crazes were not without their beneficial features. They stimulated individual enterprise, created trade, and encouraged the circulation of money, which, after all, was the primary consideration of those prisoners who had to keep things going by hook or crook in the determination to turn a few shillings wherewith to buy the fuel to keep the human engine going.

Individual enterprise in Ruhleben had a big opportunity and a highly successful run, but it was interrupted summarily. It was not free from disadvantages. Budding princes of commerce who failed to make good, and who tired of their businesses, sold

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out at low prices. One or two of the more astute prisoners, trained men of commerce, were always ready to acquire languishing concerns possessed of any promise of success, and consequently, there was the danger of monopolies becoming established, and the dread of trust operations in Ruhlleben brought about a movement which ruled out the individual business man, except within certain limitations, as narrated in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *THE TRADING BOOM*

Among the many innovations of the communal government which met with wholehearted approval was the prohibition of individual trading in necessary articles. The term was wide in its interpretation, comprising foodstuffs, clothing, in short, anything which was in widespread demand and to the benefit of the community. It was a demonstration of socialistic trading upon a comprehensive scale, and, all things considered, proved a complete success. It ruled out the profiteer; secured control of the supply of necessities which, in turn, contributed to equitable distribution; and insured prisoners obtaining what articles were urgently required at a reasonable price.

It was not only the communal government which brought about the disappearance of

the individual tradesman. The German authorities acquiesced in the proposal, and, in fact, took steps to see that private trading in necessary articles was suppressed. To venture into such a field was to invite certain disaster and punishment. The official action was prompted by motives vastly different from those of the camp government. The latter acted merely from the defensive point of view; the former lent its powerful co-operation because it drew  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. commission upon the income derived from trading operations. Clandestine trading in necessities would have deprived the German authorities of a certain amount of revenue; hence the energy it displayed in suppressing individual enterprise.

As the demand for necessities was far in excess of the supply and the field offered attractive possibilities to aspiring Universal Providers, it may be thought that the assumption of trading operations in this connection by the communal authorities would effectively smother individual initiative, but this was not so. It merely obliged ambitious

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traders to become more daring in their undertakings. They were free to embark upon any venture which did not rank as a necessity. Thus, for example, I set up as an engraver and jeweler. Another prisoner was skilled in marble carving and polishing, and he was permitted to ply his craft unmolested.

From the foregoing it will be seen that sufficient scope was granted to the industrious to build up a business. The communal ruling had one beneficial effect: it eliminated the get-rich-quick type of trader, who even in the internment camp was alert to exploit his fellows if the opportunity were presented.

To recapitulate all the ways and means whereby shillings were earned at Ruhleben Camp would be wearisome. The majority became infected with the money-making bacillus, and no job was considered too arduous or humble so long as it brought an adequate reward. From the first, waiting in the queue at the parcels office for a present from home was tedious, and it became additionally irksome later on if one hap-



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pened to be established in business, as it involved shutting up shop, possibly for several hours. If a prisoner were ill and unable to leave his quarters, he felt the absence of the parcel which he knew was waiting, with especial keenness, as it probably contained something of which he was in serious need, such as a tin of milk or nourishing British bread.

One day a prisoner suggested that he be permitted to fetch a sick prisoner's parcel. The man, who was too ill to fetch it himself, gladly accepted the offer and gave his comrade the requisite authority. Up to this time we had been somewhat doubtful as to whether the authorities would hand over a parcel to anyone but its lawful owner, and so the experiment was followed somewhat anxiously. The man came back with the parcel, and related that no objections had been raised, the officials accepting the written authority as completely relieving them of all responsibility in case of a dispute.

The man who had fulfilled the errand was rewarded with a "tip," and this reward set him thinking. He offered to serve any other

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prisoner in a similar capacity, at a nominal charge, and made such a good thing out of the job that in a short time we could point to an efficient service of professional parcel clearers.

At that time the system of clearing the parcels from the office was not organized, and this service proved wonderfully convenient. The parcel clearers divided the camp into territories, to avoid competition and confusion. They would make the trip to the official notice-board, notify each prisoner therein that a parcel was awaiting claim, and request the necessary written authority to clear it. Armed with this declaration they took their position in the queue, presented themselves at the office window, and secured delivery. After they had made one or two such appearances at the window, their faces, as well as the list of prisoners for whom they were acting, became familiar to the officers in charge, and the parcels were handed over without delay.

Parcel-clearing prevailed until the whole system of distributing the parcels was placed upon more scientific footing with two win-

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dows "A to K," and "L to Z." This method upset the simplicity of collection, since a man collecting parcels from both windows had to attach himself to the end of each queue to await his turn. Parcel-clearing then lost its attractions because it took longer to earn the money incidental to the errands, and so the service fell off, although it is still practised upon a less comprehensive scale.

These collectors also served another useful purpose, somewhat reminiscent of the District Messenger Service of London. I have already referred to the fact that the communal shops announced when certain articles of food were on hand and how queues formed outside these shops. A prisoner could call upon one of the messengers to assume a position in the queue for him and then at a later hour exchange places with him. It was a highly convenient service, and widely appreciated, while the cost was only twopence!

When we were first interned the German Government reduced its expenditure upon culinary articles to the minimum, and we

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were only supplied with basins. We felt the absence of plates, knives and forks keenly, until one prisoner secured a stock and started a prosperous business. They were apparently purchased from a German firm, but we never troubled our heads over the thought of trading with the enemy, so eager were we to secure the utensils, and we willingly paid the enterprising tradesman's prices, which were certainly at war level.

The introduction of plates gave birth to another lucrative calling. This was a dish-washing service, and as hot water was then a luxury, only obtainable from the kitchen, there was not a single man among us who could truthfully confess that he appreciated the task. The appearance of the service was hailed with delight, and when we commenced to receive parcels from home, the dish-washers did a thriving business. Their charges were trivial in comparison with the service they rendered, and they deserved every penny they earned. The heating apparatus attached to each barrack was equipped with an exhaust steam pipe dis-

charging into the open air through the side wall; and at these the dish-washers used to congregate, armed with small basins of water which they held so that the steam could play upon the water and warm it, an arm-breaking task, for ten minutes exposure was necessary to take the chill off the water.

Another occupation was created by the residents in the lofts and horse boxes, who appointed orderlies to keep the barracks clean and neat. The appointment lasted as long as the orderly cared to hold it. His weekly salary was paid by the occupants, the usual contribution from each being 10 *pfennigs*—one penny—per week, although some of the wealthy prisoners gave more. In the horse boxes, this service was supplemented by that of "fags." The fag was not posted to a single box but had a regular round of patrons. His duties were keeping the apartment clean, making the beds and performing similar services. The average weekly payment for this was about 5 shillings a box. When a prisoner was fagging to three, four or half a dozen boxes regularly, his weekly aggregate was not to be despised.

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Still another prisoner was inspired to make money by the obvious need of laundering facilities in the camp and he set up as a laundryman. It was a case of wash in the evening and return the following morning, as many of the prisoners had but one shirt and one pair of socks. This individual found himself in great demand, but it is doubtful if his venture paid him, for soap meant a heavy investment and the clothes were so soiled as to require hard rubbing. Even then it was a subject for friendly discussion as to whether the clothes were not dirtier after than before—at all events their appearance did not undergo improvement. His initiative sufficed to set a laundry boom going. There was a run on soap supplies and the washerman worked hard and long, but a strong objection was raised to the lofts being turned into drying rooms at night. We could have tolerated the depressing sight presented by the lines of saturated clothing, but wet bedding did not contribute to the general comfort; and the prisoners ordered the workers to dry their clothes outside. This was done, though unwillingly.

*Spick and Spandau. The fashionable Tailors*



**A & S. U. SAUCE**

"NOTHING LIKE IT."

PRICE 50 PFENNIGS.

Cover design of the Christmas, 1916, number of  
The "Ruhleben Camp Magazine."





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No longer was it possible for a prisoner to have his undergarments washed out over night and dried in readiness for morning. At least a day outside on the line was necessary; and those who could not afford a change of clothing either had to continue wearing what they possessed until it would no longer hold together or pass a day in bed while it was laundered. Generally speaking, the enterprise was not popularly acclaimed: still in accordance with the trend of things at Ruhleben it had its boom. After we demanded that the drying be conducted in the open air, the limited open space outside the barracks—this was before the days of the “field”—became crossed with a gridiron of lines upon which the washed garments flapped wildly, transforming the area into a scene suggestive of the backyards of the London tenement district. We insured our comfort at night, but we suffered untold miseries during the day.

I, myself, was not free from the desire to try my hand at something to earn money,

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for I needed it badly. I commenced in a humble way, washing shirts at a penny a time, then embarking upon dishes, until I found it unprofitable. Later, I advertised that I was open to buying anything, and was therewith snowed under by the ensuing volume of business, especially in old boots. After that I ventured as a professor of phrenology, and "feeling bumps" in Ruhleben was very profitable while it lasted. But my sheet anchor was engraving, which I diligently prosecuted for several months, with jewelry and watches as side lines. The venture proved a great success, notwithstanding several Teuton hunts through my little shop for articles wrought of gold, expeditions void of profit for those concerned.

Tobacco was always welcome in Ruhleben, and it mattered little what sort so long as it could be smoked. British cigarettes were considered articles *de luxe*, although those which came in the parcels from home were often of the cheapest variety. Whenever possible, I placed British cigarettes on sale and a rush of trade ensued. I was inclined to be selective in my choice of cus-

tomers, preferring to sell them to my regular clientele, for this served to keep my trade connection alive. I had a rule never to sell more than twenty-five at a time to any one customer, although I often had the chance to dispose of more. On one occasion a prisoner offered to buy out my whole supply at very generous terms, but I suspected him of wanting to corner the market and refused his tempting offer. Such attempts were frequently made; sometimes they proved successful, at others, the plunger burned his fingers. Success turned on one's ability to jump in and out quickly. One never knew what the next day's parcels would bring to upset any cornering scheme; moreover, public fancy was fickle and it was risky to repeat a successful venture.

It was my decision to specialize in one line of goods, to which I attribute my commercial success. Once I discovered a Jewish fellow-prisoner who had a stock of wrist watches with which he had not been successful. I got in touch with him and offered to buy the lot, stating my terms of purchase. To him the price seemed ridiculous,

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but I held out, and as he was anxious to get rid of them, he finally came down to my figure. I sold every watch before many hours had passed and at an attractive price, to his intense disgust. He thought I had been fairly landed with a sticking line and had been chuckling at his scoop in getting rid of them. He was a commercial sport, however, and offered to sell me another consignment at the same figure.

One might wonder what possibilities for engraving could exist at Ruhleben, yet it kept me working from morning to night as hard as I could. When I started my business I canvassed the camp from end to end, creating trade and urging everyone to order some inscribed memento of the internment camp. Orders rained in upon me. Watches, links, brooches and souvenirs of all sorts were brought to me to receive inscriptions. I cut the price to half of those prevailing at home, for I was in desperate need of employment to distract my thoughts, and as engraving calls for complete concentration I was able to occupy my mind very effectively.

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Cups and other prizes awarded at the sports, and also presentations were entrusted to my charge to receive inscriptions, and some of these undertakings proved exceedingly difficult. One job which I regard with intense pride was the engraving of a pair of sleeve links presented by the canteen staff to Mr. Pyke as a recognition of his masterly direction of that difficult enterprise. The order called for the engraving of 170 letters upon the four surfaces, each of which was about the size of a threepenny piece. The characters are naturally microscopic, but they are cleanly cut and readable. To convey some idea of the profit involved, I have earned as much as £4 in one day, working from 5 A. M. to 9 P. M., while in four months I cleared £150 profit.

Other industrious prisoners were equally lucky. When the prisoners commenced to take an interest in their appearance, the professional barbers among us saw a golden opportunity. The hairdressing saloon became part of every barrack. The barber established himself just within the entrance.

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the conditions naturally compelling him to carry his stock-in-trade to and fro every morning and night. They did a flourishing business, and each, by mutual agreement, secured an assured patronage. For an inmate of one barrack to patronize the barber of another was considered an unpardonable sin. A prisoner was supposed to support the hairdresser of his own barrack, and this feeling was so strong that the barber of one barrack would not willingly attend to a customer from another. But hairdressing was subsequently ruled to be a necessary trade and a well appointed central hairdressing saloon was established in the grandstand and run by the communal government.

As time went on and business developed, authors and journalists entered the lists. The coming of the theater gave the artists and ticket-writers a glorious chance to devise striking and attractive posters, which were displayed upon all eligible advertising spaces, though they found their markets somewhat limited until the camp magazine was launched. But although their zeal was

laudable prices were low. Water colors sold as a rule for 3d. to 1s. each; art connoisseurs in Ruhleben were not disposed to pay fancy prices for unique contemporary masterpieces. Portrait-painters had a successful run owing to the absence of photography, but were challenged keenly by cartoonists, the humorous in the internment camp never failing to make appeal. Another branch of activity which met with deserving recompense was model-making. Some of these works were distinctly noteworthy, those dealing with sections of the camp prepared to scale, arousing widespread attention from their striking fidelity to the most minute detail.

As trading developed, anything which could be converted into something saleable by effort and ingenuity was seized upon. The garbage barrels were ransacked for material. One prisoner collected the shallow pots and glass vessels, originally containing potted meat or jam, which had been sent to the camp from home. These he cleaned and nattily worked up to be sold as ash-trays. He cleared them out at three-

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pence each, the Ruhleben Club proving one of his best customers. Tins, pieces of wood, and other rubbish were similarly reclaimed, to be worked up into something of unusual novelty or utility.

Despite our mad zeal for trading, charity was not ignored and none of us were too busy to give effort and labor on behalf of a good cause.

While the commercial instinct was uppermost, life in Ruhleben was brisk and crammed with incident; but as the facilities became curbed, owing to the intervention of the authorities and to the economic depression developing in the country itself, trading zeal languished. The boom petered out, and it is to be feared that Ruhleben has relapsed into that state of suspended activity and despondency characteristic of the early days of the camp's existence.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### *CHRISTMAS IN RUHLEBEN.*

*"You can well understand our feeling of horror at the prospect of going through a third winter in a prison camp!"*

These words were written by one of the Britishers interned at Ruhleben a few days before Christmas, 1916. The outlook was, indeed, dismal. Food was scarce, except for the parcels from England; fuel was running short; trading activity in Ruhleben had slumped—in short, a wave of utter despondency had overwhelmed the camp.

But it was the winter of 1914—our first at Ruhleben—that will never be forgotten by any one of the 4,000 odd interned British. It was an unholy nightmare, the mere memory of which causes one who passed through it to shiver involuntarily, even when comfortably ensconced beside a blazing hearth at home.

There was one prospect more than any

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other that we regarded with dread—that of spending the joyful season of Yuletide in prison and in exile. The vaunted Teutonic organization had broken down under the strain which our internment had imposed, and the officials were at their wit's end to know what to do. We misinterpreted this manifestation of mismanagement. During the dreary days of November we nursed the thought that we should spend Christmas with our loved ones. What else could Teuton apathy signify? Our excitement grew intense; the most sensational stories flew hither and thither through the camp. The tenor of each one was identical: we were going to be sent home. Whence these rumors started, no one seemed to know and cared less.

Crouching over the basin of coffee and piece of black bread, shivering with cold and fanned by icy draughts, with tempers too quick to permit the slightest civil word, a member of the party would valiantly strive to liven matters by idly remarking:

“Did you hear that story down at the kitchen? They say all civilian prisoners are

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going to be exchanged on the understanding that neither country will use them as soldiers."

"Shucks!" would come the growled comment from sceptics, accompanied by guffaws of derision from others. But those hoping against hope shuffled off to relate the story in undertones to colleagues who were content to accept Dame Rumor without the slightest questioning, the narrator embroidering the report to satisfy his imagination. And so the idle remark was bandied from party to party, undergoing distortion, until it had completed its circuit of the camp, and had returned to us in scarcely recognizable form. One of the prisoners, his face beaming, would burst in, and with firm and cheery conviction, call out:

"Well, boys! It won't be long now before we're home. The Germans have had enough of us, and are going to clear us out before Christmas! Fact! I heard it on good authority, and it's official!"

"What's the reason?" innocently asked by a sceptic, who had ridiculed the rumor when first uttered.

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"Oh! The fellow who told me says that Germany is finding it too expensive to keep us!"

Howls of derisive mirth would greet this solemn assurance.

Every hour brought its variation of the old, old story. It was only those among us who had previously experienced other German prisons who had the hardihood to greet these yarns with noisy hilarity. Personally, I believe it was certain of the officials among the Germans themselves, who, in the first instance, gave rumor wing. From previous experience in Wesel, Senne-lager, and Klingelputz, I knew it was quite in keeping with their tactics to cultivate such hopes. Thereby they were likely to keep us quiet and tractable. However, as time wore on, the authorities became apprehensive as to the after-effects which would be likely to arise. They realized that once the prisoners saw through the delusion and realized that they had been mercilessly, even cruelly, hoodwinked, that infinite trouble might ensue.

One morning we received a curt summons

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to parade. Everyone hurried up, taut with excitement. The officer roared:

"Prisoners! You will be permitted to receive parcels from home if you can get them. But if any further rumors are circulated through the camp relating to your pending release, which is not going to be considered for a moment, no effort will be spared to trace their origin, and the offender, if caught, will suffer punishment."

This was shivering the idol of hope with a vengeance. The facial studies which followed this pronouncement baffle description. I have never seen such lugubrious "all-is-up" expressions. The Teuton is nothing if not heartless when apparently extending concessions. It was all very well for the officer to remark, with assumed magnanimity, that we might receive parcels from home to cheer us at Christmastide, but how about those of us who hailed from Britain? How should we be able to receive such welcome gifts in time? Letters took from ten to fifteen days to reach home, owing to the caprice of the authorities, while parcels occupied from three weeks to a

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month to come out! And here was Christmas hard upon us! Truly cynicism is superlative among German characteristics.

The solemn warning, however, did not exercise the slightest effect. The optimists, surviving the first shock of disaster, popped up as lively as ever. They construed the Teuton official action as an astute display of bluff; but those amongst us who had suffered in other prisons and who had every reason to know that the Germans meant what they said, decided to take the law into our own hands. Rumor had had far too long and untrammelled a sway. We caught one of the story-mongers red-handed. We did not denounce him to the authorities to ascertain the character of the punishment to be awarded, we ducked him in the pond. The icy cold water quenched his imagination very effectively, and the rumors grew less.

Then the Germans artfully laid another snare to lull us into tractability. A carefully-prepared story was circulated to the effect that on Christmas Day we were to receive an unexpected treat. Although far from home, and victims of circumstances,

we were to be given the time of our lives at the expense of the German nation. It was to be a time which we would never forget, and it would dispel every feeling of gloom and dejection. The Germans, so we were led to believe, were fully aware of the joyousness and festivity with which the Britisher honored the Yuletide Season, and how keenly he appreciated roast beef, plum pudding, mince pies, and numerous other dainties associated with the season. This deeply rooted institution was to be suitably honored.

This unexpected outburst of Teuton magnanimity and fellow-feeling took us completely by surprise. It seemed so foreign to the German nature. And I must admit that in one respect the authorities were correct in their prophesy. There is not one of us who will ever forget the dinner received on Christmas Day, 1914, in Ruhleben prison camp.

The announcement effected its object. The story provided us with another topic of conversation, and smothered all further discussion regarding pending release. Those

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who had fallen into the slough of despondency were re-lifted to a state bordering on ecstasy.

A week before Christmas I was the recipient of an unexpected treat—a parcel of 400 British cigarettes. None of us had tasted the flavor of a home-made cigarette since we had been interned, and the only smokes that we could obtain at that time were those cheap articles which the Germans alone know how to make—and to smoke! There were 140 men in my barrack and the cigarettes were distributed among them. No one can picture the joy which those fags gave. The men smoked them slowly, enjoying the taste and aroma of the tobacco to the full. But what were 400 cigarettes among so many? They did not last long, and we soon came down to the sole remaining “coffin nail.” Who out of the twelve in our party should have the honor of its company? This momentous issue was settled in true *Ruhleben* manner: we went outside the barrack, placed the cigarette upon a post, and each advanced in turn for a draw. By careful management, we suc-



ceeded in securing two puffs each; and the fragment we finally discarded afforded extreme delight to a sailor, who recovered it and promptly rammed it into his pipe.

Christmas Eve arrived. With what delight we looked forward to the morrow. During the preceding days nothing had been discussed but the coming feast of Lucullus, and our wan faces commenced to glow in pleasurable anticipation. The few among us whom no specious German promise could buoy up, having had experience in this connection, hesitated to express our innermost thoughts. We studiously reserved our opinions, being perfectly content to wait and see.

Although the Germans might furnish us with another bitter disappointment, a kindly sympathetic heart outside was resolved that we should not be entirely deprived of all the joys associated with Christmastide. Mrs. K——, the wife of our popular colleague, W.T.K.——, sent a parcel to each member of our party. It was hailed with unmitigated pleasure. Her womanly action was appreciated to the full, and although we felt

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that our joy was at the expense of our colleague, still we thanked him and his consort wholeheartedly and toasted their health.

As evening, gloom, and darkness settled down we became more fretful and taciturn. Strive how we might we could not banish from our minds thoughts of home and the merry times we were wont to have at this season of the year.

Christmas Eve was not without excitement. The "P.-G.'s" decided to have a good old time so far as the limitations of their quarters would allow them, and they endeavored to ignore the loyalist element completely. Their German friends and relatives had sent them bulky parcels, which, when opened, were found to be packed with little Teuton Christmas delights and emblems—colored wax candles, diminutive Christmas trees, and similar articles. Armed with these sinews for keeping up the good old times they proceeded to celebrate the Yuletide. The candles were stuck in the mouths of empty bottles, as candlesticks, and displayed on the tables, while each prisoner

routed among his belongings to fish out mementos from home. When these hurried decorations had been completed to satisfaction, and the candles had been lighted, they sang the German patriotic songs.

Soon we were all hustled to bed. But not to sleep, although I tried desperately. So I got up to pace the narrow alley-way, extending the full length of the black hole, flanked on either side by the bunks containing my recumbent colleagues.

The cold was intense; it penetrated to and chilled my marrow. Our quarters had not received any heating apparatus at that time, and many of the prisoners had not even been given a blanket. They lay huddled in shapeless masses, snuggling together upon the dirty loose straw, to profit from collective warmth. One and all, almost without exception, were shivering in their sleep.

The straw, saturated with filth and thickly invested with vermin, emitted a horrible stench as it became heated up by the emaciated bodies of the sleepers, with which was mingled the nauseating odor of stale clothing and human perspiration. The

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sleepers tossed upon their hard couches like cattle, vainly endeavoring to burrow into the straw.

The sounds coming involuntarily from the prone forms were heartrending. The majority of the men, their nerves overwrought, were jabbering incoherently in their slumber. Many were crying and sobbing pitifully. It was a restless sea of outraged humanity calling out to Heaven in its sleep.

After a while, one or two other prisoners, who were unable to secure oblivion through sleep, got up and joined me in my pacings. But walking in the darkness was no panacea, so we decided to gain a little respite from our thoughts by emulating the actions of our childhood on such a night as this. We hung our stockings and socks from the rafters, as if in mockery of the dawning day of peace and good will. The occupation satisfied our minds. At last, thoroughly worn out, we threw ourselves down to sink into a deep and welcome sleep.

When the prisoners awoke and caught sight of the empty socks and stockings hang-

ing mournfully from the rafters the loft rang with shouts of mocking laughter and banter. But so far as our party was concerned the mirth was misplaced. True, our stockings were empty, but under our pillows we found welcome prize packets, containing handkerchiefs, cigarettes, socks, and other little trifles of which we were in sore need. A good fairy, once again Mrs. K——, had imparted Christmas spirit to our prison. Her husband had received them in bulk, and had surreptitiously slipped them beneath our pillows. The discovery of these so deeply moved us that we were incapable of a word of gratitude, but our mute appreciation proved far more telling than the most profuse expressions of pleasure.

We were astir early, and the majority, each with his basin tucked under one arm, and his other hand clutching his hunk of bread, moved off to the Church under the grandstand to participate in the early morning service with which we had decided to welcome the coming of Christmas Day. One of our number had agreed to officiate.

That Christmas morning service was at-

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tended by one of the most dejected and motley crowds of humanity which has ever graced the Established Church. Everyone shivered with the cold. Snow and slush carpeted the ground outside, while the air had a biting sting. Some of the Faithful came in clogs; others with their feet protruding pitifully from tattered footwear. Those possessing overcoats drew them tightly round them, but many appeared only in their thin vests, ungraced by either collar or tie. I presented myself in my complete wardrobe—coarse corduroy trousers, tied under the knee with string, hitched up by a tattered belt, and a gray shirt. We took the precaution to carry our basin and bread with us, because the service was scarcely likely to be over before we were due at the kitchen before breakfast. It was the chilliest Christmas morning I can recollect, not only as regards the weather, but from the human temperament point of view as well. Things had grown so desperate that the most amiable could hardly speak a civil word to any one.

To me the service seemed strangely out

of place. There was a conspicuous absence of that buoyant atmosphere associated with Christmas morning. Greetings were certainly exchanged, but in hollow mockery, with gibe and jeer. The service was uneventful, except in connection with one hymn, the great *Ruhleben* favorite. This is Hymn 376 from the *Ancient and Modern Hymnal*, the last line of which runs:

"Give peace, O Lord, give peace again." The words were hurled forth clearly and resonantly with fearful vehemence, yet they could scarcely be heard. While the hymn was being sung, munition train after munition train thundered along the main line barely a hundred yards away, bearing its fearful freight of missiles for dealing death and destruction, while the clatter of steel against steel was punctuated by the louder booming of heavy guns undergoing their proving trials upon the adjacent testing ground at Spandau. The iterations of the words, no matter how religiously and sincerely, to such an accompaniment, appeared to be mocking the Almighty.

Presently there came a lull in the rushing

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of trains and the booming of cannon, but the uncanny silence was broken by a more ominous sound so far as the prisoners were concerned. It was the tramp! tramp! tramp! of feet, at first muffled and indistinct but growing louder each second. Our fellow-prisoners who had not attended the church service, were on their way to the kitchen to get their breakfast. Those shuffling feet brought us back to things material with a 'disconcerting jolt. It behooved us to make haste lest we miss our small share of acorn coffee. Half the congregation wildly snatched basins and bread to stampede after the marching throng. The rest proceeded somewhat more leisurely. As I vanished through the portal I caught a fleeting glimpse of our colleague holding forth with his basin on one side and his portion of bread on the other. He left after his congregation had filed out to take up his position in the long queue.

As we received our coffee we heard more about the coming midday feast. There was to be a chop, sauerkraut, vegetables, sweets, and other delights. But above all, we were



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to regale ourselves with a bottle of beer apiece, and to cheer the afternoon with a cigar! These two last-named luxuries we were to receive as a special favor, with the Kaiser's compliments!

We contained ourselves throughout the morning as best we could until the hour of 11.30 came round. How the hours dragged. We mustered punctually to the minute, but it was not until 12.45, after a wait of an hour and a quarter in the line, that we were marched off to the kitchen, which we approached babbling and talking as excitedly as a gathering of children at a Sunday school treat.

During this walk some commenced to bet freely that we were destined to receive another powerful illustration of how the Germans do things. Those who were disposed to place faith in the Teuton and his promises condemned us as a band of "Croakers!" "Wet blankets!" "Jeremiads!" and "Jonahs!"

We were not destined to be kept on the rack of suspension much longer. Those who

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were first in the line received a meal fully in accordance with the much-lauded story, but when Barrack 3 reached the kitchen something seemed to have gone amiss. Either the first arrivals had been treated too liberally, or else the mathematical Teuton had dropped a few figures from his calculations. At all events, supplies were petering out at an alarmingly rapid rate. I only received a bone without any meat—an island in a sea of dubious gravy, without even a fragment of potato.

Those who followed fared worse. There was nothing in the soup line left for them. The Germans hastily remedied the unexpected deficiency by furnishing each man with a rasher of raw, repulsive fat bacon. But this hasty expedient did not suffice. By the time Barrack 6 arrived, even the bacon had given out; there was not a shred of rind for them. They received nothing beyond a portion of greasy, thin soup. And this was the wonderful Christmas dinner about which so much had been said! The disappointment of the prisoners from Barrack 6 was so intense, and the mutterings grew so loud,

that even the Germans grew alarmed. Nothing could be done, but the officials, following the invariable Teuton practice when trouble appeared imminent, placated the prisoners with honeyed words and specious promises of "something very nice for tea!" As these unfortunate prisoners had been waiting patiently for over two hours to be rewarded with nought beyond the ordinary daily fare, it is not surprising that they audibly expressed their opinion of German system and organization. They retraced their footsteps to the barracks with their faith in German promises sadly shattered, and cherishing decided doubts as to the evening meal.

Upon receiving our dinner we were told to hurry to the grandstand to receive the Kaiser's presents—the bottle of beer and the cigar. I think the authorities must have deliberately plotted this additional luxury as a reward to the fleetest of foot. I sprinted for all I knew how, and succeeded in getting both the bottle of beer and the cigar. The majority were forced to be content with one or the other, and counted themselves as

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mighty lucky to get even one-half of the promised gift.

Reaching our barracks, we made the most of our meal, supplementing official shortcomings with what our small parcels from home, a few of which had come to hand, would yield. The latter were shared in the usual manner, but there was insufficient to go round. Our discontent was not assuaged by the discovery of one circumstance. The pro-Germans appeared to have fared best as regards the dinner, beer, and cigars.

We whiled away the afternoon with the cigars so magnanimously presented to us by the All Highest. The Kaiser must have learned something about the condition of our living quarters, and, being generally credited with an inventive turn of mind, evolved a type of disinfecting smoke to be submitted to exacting test at our expense. The weed was universally declared to be "some cigar," but the less grateful and more critical unceremoniously dubbed them "stinkers." These doubtful Havanas were discarded with freedom, for only the physically fit could stand up under them.

When the hour for the evening meal came round Barrack 6 scampered off for the delectable dainty which it was due to receive. For the most part this luxury assumed the form of a herring, but the ungrateful recipients made one fatal mistake. They would persist in testing a Teuton gift herring with the olfactory nerve! The result was disastrous.

It was a miserable evening, absolutely deficient in cheeriness and comfort. Mark Tapley would have been frozen into silence had he made any effort to improve the dragging hour with witticism or banter. Our pro-German enemies alone proved capable of passing the time, and incidentally they provided us with the solitary form of amusement which came our way. They brought an array of tables from the grandstand, and with the utmost sang froid imaginable set them out in a continuous counter along the narrow solitary gangway bisecting the loft. By so doing they drove every other prisoner to his bunk, but this was immaterial to them. Out came the colored candles and other decorations. Within

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a few moments the whole loft was ablaze with light. Seating themselves on either side of this improvised table, each man stood his Christmas tree before him, and with the other delights contained in his parcel set out to have a high old time.

The feelings of us crouching and shivering in our bunks must be left to the imagination. At first we struggled hard to ignore them, but their raucous laughter, coarse jokes, and unabashed expressions of sympathy with the German cause, began to fan the flames, and when they burst out into exuberant song, and let fly the words of "*Deutschland uber Alles*" with all the vigor they could command, the more fidgetty among us got up and commenced to express displeasure in unmistakable manner. As the alley way was blocked by the tables, movement was difficult, but we settled this by roughly pushing away any table which barred our path.

The scowlings and mutterings grew fiercer. One prisoner, a rabid patriot, at last declared it was more than he could stand. He was somewhat too rough in pass-

ing a table to please the pro-Germans sitting around it. They expostulated savagely, and he retorted just as energetically. Voices commenced to rise in anger and protest. Thereupon the Britisher, discarding his coat and rolling up his shirt sleeves, declared his intention to mop up the floor with the "whole blarmed lot of them."

The appearance of armed force restored order. The British loyalists were peremptorily ordered to bed—and so were the "P.-G.'s" They protested, declaring they were doing no harm, but the guards were taking no risks. "Better prevent a fight than be called upon to quell one," was their rule, so our enemies were forced to surrender. Candles were speedily extinguished, and together with the other clutter were ordered to be put out of sight. Unfortunately, we had cause to regret having taken such drastic measures, for we were condemned to suffer a repetition of the nightly decorations and celebrations for nearly a week, during which the Christmas festivities were prolonged, the orgies only coming to an end when the candles had been consumed.

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Boxing Day threatened to be every whit as depressing, but one or two of us, having shaken off the dejection into which we had been plunged by a cheerless Christmas, endeavored to infuse a little of the fun and excitement of a seasonable British winter Bank Holiday into our existence. We had a merry snowball fight, to which I have referred elsewhere, which, however, was summarily interrupted by the guard. Still, for a very brief period we enjoyed ourselves wholeheartedly and forgot our miserable surroundings.

The solitude, darkness, stench, vermin, and cold of the barracks brought us back to our dismal, aimless life at Ruhleben with added emphasis, and we passed the enforced idleness of Boxing Night, heads in hands, ruminating and wondering how it all would end! I have spent many a Christmas under strange conditions, but the memory of one is indelibly seared into my brain. The recollections of the first Christmas spent in the internment camp of Ruhleben in 1914 will never be forgotten: they will remain with me until the end.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### *WHEN THE PINCH WAS FELT*

I have already described the meager fare with which we were supposed to keep body and soul together at Ruhleben. Sugarless and milkless coffee made from acorns, a small basin of thin, unappetizing soup, and one-fifth of a loaf of black bread per day constitute short commons for a healthy man. It was more the indomitable spirit of the Britisher than the food that kept us going. Physically we suffered severely, and our weights sank to alarmingly low levels.

We grumbled a great deal during the early days, when food was comparatively plentiful in Germany, but later, complaints gave way to tense apprehension. Shorter commons did not affect those flush of funds so much as poorer members of the community. The canteen was an excellent standby, for there we could buy various articles

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in the commissary line, so long as we were prepared to pay for them. Thus, very good *brodchens* could be purchased at two a penny, and, needless to say, were in great demand.

The outlook first began to assume a sinister aspect when the bread ration was diminished. The shrinkage was so marked that we felt before long we should be compelled to go without. As time passed, even the canteen and pocket-money ceased to be a substitute because the *brodchens* disappeared. They could not be obtained for love or money. Subsequently a substitute for these appreciated *brodchens* became available, a composite or "necessity" bread, that was tolerably palatable, although it was more expensive.

The shortage of bread naturally hit us severely. There ensued a general tightening of the waistbelt, while faces, already pinched, became more pinched. Everyone began to suffer terribly, but we bore the situation with the stoicism of Indians. Privation became more widespread and intense

as the weeks passed without bringing any change in the state of affairs.

But alas! There was only one court to which we could make appeal. This was the American Embassy. When first suggested, this proposal failed to meet with general acclamation; we were rather disposed to trust to luck and to work out our own salvation. Finally hunger got the upper hand and we petitioned the United States' Ambassador to intercede on our behalf. The first letters failed to draw a reply, doubtless owing to the fact that they were intercepted by the authorities or because they infringed the regulation that all letters addressed to persons outside had to be posted open, so that the camp authorities might acquaint themselves with the contents. This law was so rigid as to apply to communications sent to the Embassy which had assumed the responsibility so far as it lay within its powers, for our well-being. We hoped that such letters would be safe from official censorship, and that the authorities would leave action to the discretion of the Embassy, which naturally would not exceed its limit.

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But the Germans are ignorant of the meaning of the word "honor," preferring to judge other people by their own standard and interpretation of terms. While we have no absolute evidence that the German authorities deliberately destroyed, or mislaid any communications addressed to Mr. Gerard from prisoners in Ruhleben Camp, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence available to prove that our misgivings upon this question were not ill-founded.

When, finally, a representative visited the camp we drew attention to our direful plight with a daring appeal. We wrote in the dust upon the Ambassador's motor-car "For God's sake give us bread!" and threw into his vehicle letters emphasizing the conditions. This appeal did not go unanswered. Mr. Gerard, with the promptitude which signaled all his efforts on behalf of the British civilians, when conditions were not exaggerated or imaginary, petitioned for an increased supply and three days after his visit the ration reverted to the normal, but, as was always the case, after the sensation had lost its nine days' interest, it was gradu-

ally but persistently, again reduced until it regained the level which had compelled us to petition the assistance of our solitary guardian angel.

Indeed, I really think we suffered from having so boldly sought the aid of the American Ambassador, for the last stage of the bread question was far worse than the first. We were served with bread which was absolutely uneatable: even men torn with hunger hesitated to tackle it. The interior was as saturated with water as a sponge, was quite uncooked, and was nauseating both to the palate and the eye. We could wring the water out of it. It had to be eaten right away: to keep it for even a few hours was to see it grow moldy, musty, and even decompose. Some of us endeavored to keep it for a short time, in the hope that it would become solid as the water evaporated, and become more palatable and satisfying, but this was a mistaken policy. Others who ate it at once suffered severely from indigestion.

The discontent grew more serious. We pestered the authorities with requests to

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improve the bread, but for a long time to no avail. At last they gave us permission to change a "new" loaf for a "stale" one, but we speedily refused this alternative, for the so-called stale bread was not only stale and hard, but in addition, revoltingly green right through with mold.

Matters at last reached such a state as to provoke general discussion as to whether we ought not to make an appeal to friends and relatives at home for assistance. This had been advocated once or twice previously, but general opinion had been against it. By March, 1915, the situation had become so acute as to force us to resort to action of this character, though it was much against our will, for we felt that those at home must certainly have their hands full, and that it was scarcely fair for us to saddle them with the expense of sustaining their imprisoned compatriots in a German camp.

But necessity knows no law, and so out went postcards bearing a frantic appeal for bread to be sent us from Britain. It was this cry that must have aroused the homeland to the true conditions in Germany,

especially in the prison camps. Although we dispatched the urgent "S O S" far and wide, we realized that weeks must elapse before we received tangible response. Those intervening weeks were dark, indeed. We were reduced to a condition bordering on starvation; how the less fit among us kept going, we never knew. It seems a nightmare now. Everyone went hungry, and so hungry that they were ready to do anything to get any sort of food.

Our despairing cry met with a wonderful response. I shall never forget the scene in camp upon the arrival of the first shipment of wholesome nourishing bread from old England. We rubbed our eyes at the sight, fearing that it was only a dream, afraid to bite into the loaves, which by the way, were as hard as bricks after their long journey. When we did taste it, how we smacked our lips over the flavor and lingered over the fragments. Not a piece was wasted; we would have fought with the birds for the capture of a few crumbs.

In order to appreciate the measure of our delight at tasting British bread once more,

it is necessary to gain some idea of the staff of life which was being served out to us by our captors. The proportion of wheat constituent must have been reduced to absolute vanishing point. The exterior was crusty and as hard as a dog's biscuit; indeed, I do not think a lover of canines would ever have given his four-footed companion such food. But though the exterior was hard and had to be gnawed, the interior was a soddened mass, reeking with moisture and only partially cooked.

It was not so much the repulsive appearance and feel of the interior of the loaf, which aroused such nausea, as the ingredients employed. To break open a loaf was akin to taking a dip in a lucky-tub: something unexpected was certain to be found. Sometimes it was a wisp of straw three or four inches long—half-inch lengths were so common as not to arouse a moment's second thought—at others a hunk of potato peel or a fragment of tree bark. They were loaves of mystery in the fullest meaning of the word, and we hesitated to inquire too deeply into the character of the ingredients, lest



we receive a surprise that would compel us to renounce the food in disgust.

I collected the pieces of foreign matter discovered in the bread, prosecuting this hobby as diligently as any scientist pursues his quest. I kept them all, and my personal endeavors were supported by several comrades, who contributed their discoveries. In this manner I secured quite an imposing survey of the odds and ends, possessing absolutely no nutriment value whatever, which were associated with the German-provided staff of life.

Matters descended to such a pass that we decided to make representations to some powerful quarter in the desperate effort to secure an improvement in regard to the bread question. With every succeeding day the men were growing visibly weaker. Those who indulged in any exercise, such as a few minutes at football, had to abandon their recreation, merely because they were not strong enough to pursue it! We had to husband our strength and vitality in grim earnest. More than one man resolutely clung to his bunk for fear that undue move-

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ment or exertion would deprive his enfeebled body of the meager reserve of strength and vitality which it retained, or accentuate the pangs of hunger.

One may wonder why we evinced such an intimate interest in the German internal food question, but it struck at the very root of our existence. If the Germans had insufficient foodstuffs to keep themselves how were we likely to fare? We should certainly be placed on the shortest possible commons, and if the worst came, we were likely to be left to shift for ourselves. We knew enough of the Germans to realize that they would not hesitate to deprive us of food entirely if matters reached a crisis. This was the haunting fear. We could see the day when they would turn round and leave us to our own devices. Every successive week witnessed a diminution in our rations. What could be cut down was cut down remorselessly. The journey to the kitchen began to assume a farcical aspect. Those who were receiving supplies regularly from home refused to make this trip for food. It was regarded as so much

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wasted time and useless expenditure of effort, because the food we were receiving was steadily declining in quality and verging perilously near the line of being absolutely inedible. Great effort was required to eat it, and an indifferently nourished body revolted savagely at the indignities to which it was being subjected.

We came to rely more and more on the parcels from home, and we felt extremely grateful to relatives, friends and strangers who kept us steadily going. But for this timely help we should have starved. When we opened the parcels the soldiers would stand around longingly and, their admiration getting the better of their discretion, they would mutter, "*Mein Gott!* What food in war-time!"

We ourselves could not help pitying the guards, whom, we discovered, were placed on the most meager rations. When we heard their comments we would offer them some dainty. At first they would merely give a sickly smile and shake their heads half-heartedly. We could see that they longed to accept our hospitality but feared to be

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seen doing so. However, as hunger pressed them, they accepted what we offered, and eventually did not hesitate to beg for what we could spare. As a rule we contrived to save something out for them, for which they extended the most heartfelt thanks. It was to our advantage to keep on the soft side of our wardens, and the expenditure of food in this connection proved a profitable investment in more ways than one. It amused us—although the tragedy of it all was not lost upon us—to follow the competition between the under-officers and their men to be first in the surreptitious overhauling of the refuse bread bins, since such action constituted a breach of regulations. What we declined to eat was for the pigs, not the arrogant military of Germany, although the latter were only too pleased to get what they could at the expense of the occupants of the sties.

Neutrals visiting the camp, when questioned, would sometimes lift the veil from the state of affairs existing outside, although they were very guarded in their replies. Nevertheless, their fragments of informa-

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tion were sufficient to convince us that the German people as a whole were passing through hard times.

But the most conclusive information was brought in by a fellow prisoner, and his experience seemed to me somewhat humorous. He had commercial connections in the country, being a Britisher resident in Germany, although in this instance he was as loyal as the most rabid of the loyalists. He had been petitioning for some time to be permitted to go to Berlin to complete some vital business matter, and his importunity had finally been rewarded to the extent of a day's leave on "pass." This entitled him to quit the camp at 7.30 A. M. and to be excused until 8.30 P. M. of the same day. He thought that leave of thirteen hours in one day would be adequate for him to complete the matter on his mind, and he had left the camp in the early morning punctually at the permitted hour, extremely thankful to be able to leave Ruhleben behind him if only for one brief day.

I was hurrying from my kiosk to my barrack for the midday meal upon the day in

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question when I ran full tilt into our colleague. It was barely half past one. I looked at him in surprise.

"What are you doing here? Thought you had gone to Berlin on 'pass'?" I said.

"So I did," he answered, looking round warily, "but I was mighty glad to get back. I have never seen such sights in my life. It's awful. No wonder our food is so bad. The people there are fighting tooth and nail to get bread, meat, or anything else to eat. And the feeling against the British cannot be imagined. Had they discovered I was an Englishman they would have torn me limb from limb. I am not a nervous man, but the state of affairs frightened me. In fact, I abandoned all idea of finishing up my business transaction, and came back by the first tram I could catch.

The man certainly seemed scared. His experience had completely unnerved him. He was even afraid of his own shadow at the moment, but for an entirely different reason. As I was about to resume my walk he caught me by the sleeve, whispering in an alarmed tone:

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"For Heaven's sake don't say you have seen me. I am hiding myself until the evening. If the authorities know I am back, they will realize that I have seen more than I ought to have observed in Berlin, and that I know a good deal about the state of things in the capital. They are bluffing us for all they are worth, and if they see me before nightfall they will conclude why I came back before my 'pass' was up. A prisoner is not so deeply in love with *Ruhleben* as to want to get back to it hours before he needs to!"

I appreciated his logic and readily extended the promise. I knew full well that if caught he would be punished on suspicion of having communicated unpleasant truths among the prisoners. He succeeded in keeping himself unobserved until late that evening, when he reported himself in due course to the authorities. His experience, however, furnished the camp with food for animated conversation, since he brought face-to-face personal experience upon the matter which was of absorbing import to one and all.

We learned that our shortage of bread was due to the difficulties which the German na-

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tion was experiencing, thanks to the stringency of the British blockade. Berlin was deeply incensed against our country, and at that time was strafing Great Britain and the British with a deadly strafe. At one meeting, held in Berlin to discuss the desperate situation, and at which many notable dignitaries of the German Government made speeches, one of these, referring to the internment camp at Ruhleben and the privations of the prisoners, vehemently recommended that "we should all be starved to death!" From the way in which the authorities were going to work it certainly seemed as if this delightful suggestion were being put into execution.

During this trying period the poorer members must have succumbed to hunger but for the assistance rendered by the Communal Funds. The profits from the various enterprises enabled large purchases of edibles, including bread, to be made and sold at a comparatively reasonable figure, as I have already explained. The price thus being brought within reach, they were able to keep themselves just going.



# RUHLEBEN BRITISH CONCENTRATION CAMP.

*Financial Statement to 10<sup>th</sup> April 1915.*

## RECEIPTS:

a) For Camp Fund ex American Embassy to cover distribution of Margarine, Sugar, etc. and general Camp expenses . . . . .	22,000 —
For Camp Fund ex Other Sources, viz:	
Donations. O'Hara Murray, Esq. Collections in Barracks, Proceeds of Concerts, Variety Shows, Canteens, Boilers, Parcel Post Department, etc. . . . .	21,458.90
b) For Relief in Cash ex King Edward VII Fund . . . . .	10,401.—
c) For Relief in Cash (weekly) ex American Embassy . . . . .	69,000 —

## EXPENDITURE:

### Relief afforded:

General Camp Relief, Distribution of Margarine, Sugar, etc. . . . . (a)	13,495.85
General Camp Relief, through First Aid Society . . . . . (a)	779.58
Weekly Relief in Cash ex Embassy . . . . . (c)	67,289.50
King Edward VII Fund, Cash Distribution . . . . . (b)	10,150.—

### Amount expended in Organisation and Upkeep of Camp, viz:

Wages paid to interned prisoners (Latrines, Kitchens; Fatigue Parties, etc.) . . . (a)	3,195.20	
Disinfecting and Sanitary arrangements, Medicines, Hospital Expenses, Funeral Expenses, Office Books and Stationery, Grand Stand Seating Accomodation and Stages, making good damage done to Camp property, Repairs to windows, Purchase of utensils such as Bread Cutting machines, Pails, Brooms, Watering Cans, etc. Shop Fixtures and Shelves Canteen Improvements, Alteration to Parcels Post Department Office, Bridging Race Course Track, Deposit to Race Course Association for permission to use ground for playing purposes, etc etc. . . . . (a)	6,394.71	
	101,304.84	122,859.90
Cash in Hand and at Bank . . . . .	11,891.41	
Stock in Trade at Canteens . . . . .	20,266.32	
Sundry Debtors . . . . .	1,933.73	
Items paid in advance, Rent, etc. . . . .	353.—	
Sundry Creditors for Goods, etc. supplied . . . . .		9,032.73
Sundry Creditors for Cash on Deposit . . . . .		3,856.67
	135,749.30	135,749.30



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The parcels of food dispatched from home only arrived in the nick of time—had they been delayed there would be few remaining in Ruhleben to-day, for we were virtually *in extremis*. Once the parcels commenced to trickle in, and the stream grew more voluminous with each succeeding week, our dread apprehensions vanished. The lucky recipients of the first parcels saved the situation, for they shared their food as far as they were able. It was a curious spectacle to see a man without a cent in his pocket with which to buy food, but who had a parcel from home, dividing the contents with one or two colleagues whose pockets were bulging, or at least well-lined, but who could not turn it to useful purchasing account at the time, and whose parcel had not arrived. But it was turn and turn about: we were brothers in adversity.

When we learned that bread was on the way to the camp from England we speculated among ourselves as to whether we should really get it. Would the mob, pressed by hunger, allow it to reach the camp? Would not the harassed German

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housewives and their men-folk raid the vehicles laden therewith? Such were the fears which disturbed our minds. But the authorities had taken adequate precautions to insure the safe delivery of the prisoners' parcels and the vans were brought into camp under a strong military guard with loaded rifles. We appreciated this protection upon the part of the authorities. It conveyed the impression of being prepared to give us a square deal, at least in one connection, and so far as my experience is concerned, I never lost a food parcel from home.

But bread was not the only foodstuff which occasioned anxiety. Milk was in heavy demand, especially among some of the more delicate prisoners who could not digest the infamous war-bread. Milk was easily procurable at the canteen, and at the nominal price of 3½d. to 4d., until suddenly the Berlin press, learning that we were getting a first quality article of high standard at a low figure, wanted to know why British prisoners should be permitted to fare better than their own people? It was a specious argument, but merely begged the

question, as the milk was bought and sold by the Communal authorities. However, the newspaper agitation bore fruit and fresh milk was knocked off the list of permissible foodstuffs. Limited quantities were reserved for the use of invalids, but in a few weeks only skim milk could be obtained, which, in turn, gave way to condensed milk. At intervals a wail went up in the domestic press over some other article of food which could be obtained in the camp, with the comment that it was scarcely playing the game to permit mere prisoners to secure what was denied the German population. Such protests invariably achieved the writers' desired end—the article under criticism vanished from our list of foodstuffs—but there was one feeling of satisfaction. The German public, as a whole, was suffering quite as acutely as we were. The camp was overwhelmed with stories relating to the food riots in Berlin. At first we attributed them to rumor, but the stories were so circumstantial as to compel us to believe that there must be some truth in them.

To satisfy our curiosity upon the point we

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pestered our guards with questions, but they maintained a chilling silence: they knew nothing about the incidents to which we referred. But when the guard was changed we found the newcomers, who had experienced a turn in the trenches, far more communicative. One or two of the soldiers with whom I contrived to get on intimate terms admitted that women and children had been shot during frenzied food riots in the capital. They did not seem to be surprised at such action, because they, in the trenches, as they candidly admitted, had been unable to obtain sufficient food, and had been forced to sustain themselves on bread which was quite as objectionable as ours.

At first I thought they were merely romancing in order to keep us quiet, but from personal observation and investigation I discovered that they had under-rated, rather than exaggerated, the alarming state of affairs in Germany. Many of us, unable to eat the war-bread, or because we were relying upon supplies from home, were disposed to be wasteful with the ration. We would eat the outer crust and well-cooked portions,

discarding the remainder of it as refuse.

This wastage was observed by the powers-that-be, and accordingly an order was circulated that bread was not to be wasted. What was not required, or that which had deteriorated from prolonged keeping, was to be placed in a special bin attached to each barrack for official collection at intervals. We were told that it was to be served out to the pigs.

Night after night I observed the soldiers ransacking these bins to add to their stinted fare, but discreetly turned a blind eye in such direction, as it was to our advantage to keep on good terms with the guard. After all, these soldiers who had been through the furnace of shell and explosive on the Western Front were not bad fellows at heart: they were far more friendly and sympathetic than our former guards, and when they first came to the camp there had been a lively time between the two. The outgoing soldiers referred to us as dirty *schweinhunde* of Englishmen who must be closely watched, and they proceeded to give the newcomers many tips. The men from

## INTERNEED IN GERMANY

the front listened patiently and then shook their heads sagely as they remarked, "You, comrades, have not been to the trenches yet. We have, and we know more about the Britishers than you do. They are not at all bad fellows, and, look you here, they are clean fighters!" Such home truths were far from being palatable to the off-going guards, but the raw fighting man could not argue with the veteran, and so departed strafing us more ferociously than ever, until experience in the trenches perhaps brought about a change of opinion.

But we could not resist meditating upon the outcome of it all. When under-officers and privates were ready to quarrel like the sparrows over bread refuse, what would happen when the people at large came to the end of the tether of patient waiting? Everyone knew we were receiving excellent food from home, for the appetizing contents of the parcels consigned to Ruhleben were bruited far and wide. When we were unduly depressed we would speculate as to whether the emaciated populace, driven by hunger, would resort to force, and make a



bold bid to intercept our parcels. This thought was ever in our minds, and it is a possibility which to-day disturbs the serenity, such as it is, of Ruhleben Camp more than anything else. The day mob law secures the upper hand in the Germanic Empire, and the consignment of the parcels for prisoners at Ruhleben becomes imperilled, travail will come to the camp. Without supplies from England the civilians interned upon the banks of the Spree must certainly perish.

To those who are sleeping soundly at home this statement may not seem convincing, but it is one which will be endorsed by every man who has suffered in Ruhleben. It was a frequent topic of conversation, and though we used to laugh as we sat round our table enjoying the array of delicacies contained in the latest package from home, and would jocularly venture "Wonder what'll happen if the beggars ever take it into their heads to raid our parcels?" We did not turn a blind eye to such a possibility.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *FREEDOM AT LAST*

Our ranks were thinned from time to time by the sending home of certain prisoners, but only a few at a time went at first, and those at rare intervals. For the most part, those set free were suffering from physical degeneration as a result of their privations, or, what was more frequently the case, showing signs of mental breakdown from the same cause. The first were hurried away because the authorities were anxious to keep down the mortality rate at Ruhleben; the second, because the domestic asylums were already overcrowded by Germans whose minds had given way.

This selection of prisoners for return to Britain only served to bring home to those remaining behind the utter hopelessness of their position. It seemed as if the German threat that we were to be kept and

herded like cattle until the war was over was to be fulfilled. From whatever viewpoint the future was regarded the prospect was black. We could not dispel the feeling that the war might last for years, and that as the Germans became more and more hard pressed, our conditions would grow worse. The alternative of losing our minds before securing freedom was equally depressing.

The effect upon the more morbid of the prisoners was disastrous. They either could not or would not shake off their feeling of despair; and from prolonged brooding over their situation, they grew weak both in body and mind, could not sleep and forget their troubles for a little while, and lost what appetite they might have had for *Ruhleben* fare.

Although the authorities at *Ruhleben* refrained from torturing the bodies of their captives, they did not hesitate to stretch their minds upon the rack of suspense, buoying up the hopes we raised, to thrust us back again into the depths of despair.

The capabilities of the Germans in this respect were brought home to the *Ruhle-*

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ben prisoners most acutely upon the occasion of the first notable exchange of prisoners, which took place in November, 1915. Rumors to the effect that some big movement of this sort was under way had been flying through the camp for some time, and we noticed that the authorities, contrary to the established practice, did not contradict the statement.

The anticipation with which we looked forward to some definite official step towards the realization of our dream of release may be imagined. The all-is-lost brigade became quite chirpy, and went about with smiles on their faces. When at last a parade was called and numerous questions were asked bearing upon the subject all had at heart, excitement grew intense. The camp buzzed like a beehive awakening from its period of hibernation with the first burst of spring sunshine. Speculation as to how many would be chosen, in case we were not all released, rose to fever-heat. But as the days passed without result faces once more began to droop and spirits to flag zerowards.

Then came a revival of excitement. The authorities called out a list of names during a parade, and announced that these prisoners were to have their photographs taken. Single portraits were ordered and we were informed that arrangements had been made for a photographer to visit the camp. We were to pay for our own photographs. There was a mad rush by the lucky ones to the corner of the camp where the man with the camera had pitched his studio, consisting of a bench capable of receiving three sitters at a time. I think no photographer has ever been surrounded by such a bevy of excited clients. Certainly he drove a brisk trade. The order called for two copies of each portrait, one, as we learned subsequently, to affix to the passport and the other for filing in the records.

Of course, the fact that photographs had been ordered was regarded by everyone as a step nearer home. To some of the fortunate prisoners the homeland appeared to be just over the fence. The frenzy which prevailed was indescribable. But that photographing preliminary proved a terrible

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snare. It was not the stepping-stone to freedom, as the majority declared. There are many prisoners in Ruhleben to-day whose portraits were taken as far back as November, 1915, and to them home is still as remote as ever.

One despicably cruel episode in connection with this deserves to be related, if merely because it indicates the lengths of mental torture to which German system will proceed. The photographer had completed his work for the day. Suddenly a few more prisoners' names were given out. Radiant with pleasure at the unexpected turn of events in their favor these men presented themselves to the photographer, their portraits were taken and they received the stipulated two prints, for which they paid the usual eighteenpence. But those prisoners were destined to observe party after party of prisoners depart homewards without being included among their number. The reason we discovered afterwards. Apparently the photographer had driven a bargain with the authorities. He had contracted to take so many portraits per day, to make

the visit to the camp worth his while. Upon this occasion the number fell short, so the deficiency was made up by selecting prisoners to the number required, merely to have their photographs taken, and thus enable the man with the camera to draw the sum for which he had contracted. It was pure robbery as well as cruelty, but it fulfilled the much-vaunted German system.

Reverting to the first photographic preliminary, a few days elapsed and the reports were circulated that at six o'clock the following morning a list of the names of those prisoners who were to be exchanged would be posted on the camp notice-board. As may be readily imagined, there was little sleep among the prisoners that night. The sanguine passed the dragging hours packing their belongings, while others were too keyed up to speak, or nursed terrible fears that, after all, they might not be numbered among the lucky ones.

The night dragged wearily and far too slowly. In the early hours of that chilly morning, when the buildings stood out more drab and somber than ever against the

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murky eastern sky, the prisoners made their way to the notice-board. That space, although blank as yet, was an irresistible magnet. It possessed an element of cheerfulness and budding hope which the barracks could never give. They whistled, hummed, chatted excitedly, stamped their feet and clapped their hands across their chests to keep themselves warm and their spirits at boiling point. By five o'clock the board was surrounded by a clamoring ocean, hundreds having turned their feet in its direction in the half-hope that, at the last minute, some miracle had occurred to bring their name upon the fateful list.

When at last the papers were posted up, a wild scramble ensued. Men at the rear clambered upon the backs of those in front, in the effort to catch sight of the magic letters forming their name. Those in the front row, spotting the name of a colleague, yelled it out lustily, and gave a wild cheer of delight. Caps were thrown into the air, strange capers were cut by those giving vent to their pent-up frenzy. "Old boys" of sixty



years of age cavorted like lambs. Congratulations were showered on one and all. Many of the more wearied and ill were so overcome at the realization of their fondest hopes that they could only express their pleasure in tears.

That morning revealed one of the strongest traits of the British character—its cheerful stoicism. The German soldiers were nonplussed. They could not understand how prisoners who had been turned down, could whoop and cheer as frantically and gaily at the luck of a colleague, as if they themselves were bound for home.

But there was another side to the picture—one which was tragic and pathetic. Some of those who had been confident of release went almost crazy with disappointment and rage when they discovered their names to be missing from the list. They scanned it time after time in a kind of stupor, fearing that in their first hasty perusal they had made a mistake. Then, the awful truth dawning upon them that they were to remain in the camp indefinitely, re-action set in. Some fell to the ground in utter de-

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jection. Others crawled away silently to a quiet corner to nurse their bitter defeat. Still more crept back to their barracks, sullen, taciturn, and almost demented, with an uncanny, furtive glint in their eyes. Though that fateful board brought the greatest happiness in life to many, to others it was nought but the indication of a blank, black future.

The lucky were instantly besieged by their fellow-prisoners. Those who were to remain behind, seeing the opportunity to establish a link with home, threw discretion to the winds. Grabbing any fragments of paper which happened to be handy, they hastily scribbled unfettered, open-hearted letters to their loved ones across the North Sea, and hurled them at those who were going, with the request to see that they were duly delivered. Letters rained through the air as thickly as snowflakes in the northern wind. Some were picked up and thrust into pockets by the excited men who were about to leave us. But some of the men, remembering the ordinance that no communications of any description were to be carried

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away by returning prisoners, committed the contents to memory.

The regulation concerning the conveyance of letters was exceedingly drastic. The order set forth that no papers of any description were to be taken out of the camp. Newspapers, even those of German origin, were included in the ban. A preliminary search was to be made in the camp before departure, and the final and most inquisitive investigation was to be conducted at the frontier. Every prisoner was warned that if any paper were discovered at the latter point, then the carrier thereof would be immediately taken back to the camp, and would have to stay there until the war was over, no matter what happened.

But even that list upon the notice-board came to be regarded with fear. It had not been up very long before an official appeared, and, running down the list, erased certain names. At this action there was a fearful uproar. Had the list merely been posted to tease and harry us? Was this another manifestation of Teuton cruelty in a refined form? It certainly looked like it.

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And no further names were substituted for those withdrawn! At frequent intervals the official re-appeared, and further revisions were made. Truly the list was becoming as fearful a trap as the procedure of being photographed. As the hours passed, the fretting prisoners became more and more intractable. The men who had concluded that they were certain to reach home before Christmas, shuffled about the camp, their limbs twitching from nervous tension, afraid to peruse the board, yet hanging around it with a strange interest, and scarcely daring to speak.

No relief to the torturing anxiety came until after "lights out" the following day, when the captain of each barrack, in accordance with instructions, presented himself to the men within his particular building. The prisoners had sought the solace of their couches. He stood in the gangway of the ground-floor, his face unusually grave and set. Then in slow, loud tones, so that all might hear, he cried:

"All those who have been photographed with a view to exchange, and whose names

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have not been struck off the list, must appear at the Captain's office—the bureau of the Commanding Officer of the Camp—to-morrow at 2.30, to have their passports signed by a representative from the American Embassy. Although I am sorry for those whose names have been struck off, it is absolutely useless for them to keep worrying the Captains, as we have no knowledge whatever as to the reason for such action. The order came direct from the military authorities in Berlin, and for all I know they may be restored to the list to-morrow morning."

The announcement was received with mixed feelings. Those whose names had weathered the fickleness of the authorities were jubilant in a restrained manner, and they had a kindly thought for those who were suffering such bitter disappointment. Turning to these comrades, they remarked, with evident feeling and forced gaiety, "Cheer up, boys, your turn will come next month."

Preparation of the passports was a protracted and searching ordeal. The authori-

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ties were determined that no substitution should occur, through a prisoner, overcome by sympathy for a comrade, sacrificing his chance to return home. The following days saw further racking suspense, for never a word was vouchsafed as to when the actual departure for home would take place. The uncertainty was agonizing, because by this time, from what had previously occurred, every lucky prisoner realized that he could not count himself out of the German clutches until he had actually crossed the frontier and was off the hated soil of the country. There was the constant risk of the slip between the cup and the lip.

Again the captain of each barrack presented himself to enunciate an official command. On this occasion he was very brief. He merely stated:

“All those who have had their passports signed must present themselves at the guardhouse to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, with whatever luggage they wish to take home.”

That was all. But it brought distinct re-

lief to many a harassed mind. That night was one of remarkable activity. The lucky prisoners busied themselves packing their treasures and belongings, indulged in parting chats with the men who had been their comrades for sixteen weary months, partook of farewell feasts arranged in their honor, and went round to other buildings to shake hands with their friends. Never was the dawn of day awaited more anxiously than by these men who were so soon to be free. They were far too excited to sleep, and those who were to be left behind were every whit as anxious to witness their departure. At the back of our heads we feared that something would happen, which, according to Teuton logic, would be sufficient to make them change their decision, even at the very last minute. This was the first big exchange of prisoners. If it failed, or a hitch occurred, then we might look forward to long exile in Ruhleben. On the other hand, if the bargain were conducted honestly by the German Government, there was hope for all, since we had already ascertained that such exchanges were to be conducted at

monthly intervals. Alas! Hope springs eternal, but I think it has disappeared from the hearts of many of the weary prisoners who even today still remain in Ruhleben.

As may be imagined there were no laggards at the guardhouse the next morning. Long before ten o'clock, the appointed hour, those who were to be released were at the rendezvous. I shall never forget the procession, and the assembly lined up for the final procedure before leaving the detested camp. It was a motley crowd and a sickening spectacle. I do not think there were half a dozen fit men among them. The sifting process had been conducted by the German authorities only too well. They did not intend to free a man, who, upon his return home would be of help in prosecuting the war. Some were so debilitated and ill that they could scarcely walk; one or two were carried; others were so weak, famished, and in a condition of semi-collapse, as to be quite unable to carry their baggage. There were many willing hands to help them. The remaining prisoners generously shouldered the luggage, and extended stronger arms to



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support the weak. A fair sprinkling were demented.

The weather was execrable. A keen wind was driving across the camp, and it carried the penetrating sting of winter. The prisoners upon reaching the guardhouse were ordered to set their traps upon the ground in front of them, and to release all straps and fastenings, to enable the examination to be conducted with as little trouble to the authorities as possible. Then they were ordered to "stand by." The halt and maimed, presenting pictures of utter misery, despite the twisted smiles which lighted their wan faces, shivered as the freezing wind broke against them, and rubbed their tired weak limbs to keep life in them. It was merely the joy of getting away from the accursed spot, the anticipation of being in their own homes within the immediate future, and the fact that they would soon have the company and care of their loved ones to nurse them back to health which kept them up. Had anything happened at this last minute to delay their freedom I believe that many men would have dropped where they stood.

The authorities did not make the slightest attempt to hasten the formalities, but at last the officials came trundling out, and the search commenced.

The baggage was put through its paces. This operation was conducted with German thoroughness. Some of the bags were about as decrepit as their owners, wear and tear had played sad havoc with handbags, grips, and portmanteaux. Many were in fragments, and odd corners of the leather exterior were missing, but liberal recourse to string enabled strapping difficulties to be overcome, and many layers of newspaper covering the jagged holes formed a passable covering for the contents.

This newspaper armoring was regarded as an infringement of the regulations and was ruthlessly torn out, to be collected for destruction. Not a scrap of paper was permitted to remain. Even the letters which prisoners had received from their families, relatives and friends, and which they cherished affectionately, were confiscated. Many of the prisoners had received photographs of their wives, sweethearts, and children,

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from home. By dint of great patience they had made wooden frames for these pictures, and therewith had graced the walls of their prison. Even these were not spared. The officials tore the photographs out and threw them to the ground. The prisoners were free to take home the empty frames! The ransacking of the baggage, and the heartless confiscation of such jealously guarded treasures were harrowing, and the tears coursed down the cheeks of the older and more enfeebled.

Each article within a bag was taken out, shaken, and closely examined. As the articles passed scrutiny they were flung to the ground. When the ordeal was completed the prisoner was compelled to repack his bag. By the time the search was finished, every bag was appreciably lighter, and those which had suffered from the ravages of war and internment were sorry articles indeed. The contents protruded pathetically through the jagged holes, cracks and crevices. It was merely the string which kept the goods intact.

The search revealed to us the critical

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straits to which the German nation had been reduced by the British blockade. Owing to the cold the prisoners had purchased at the camp canteen, woolen underclothing, rugs, and other articles of attire. Everything was unceremoniously removed from the bags, and the order was announced that no woolen goods of any description were to be allowed to leave the camp. Some of the prisoners had also purchased new boots when they discovered that their release was definitely concluded, and had packed these in their bags, preferring to travel in the old footwear until the country had been left behind. But new leather boots came under a similar ban, and were to be left behind. The forbidden articles were not actually confiscated. They were not to be taken out of the camp. They could be taken back to barracks, where their owners were free to sell or to give them to their colleagues. One or two of the more resourceful prisoners dodged the order concerning new footwear very neatly. When the boots were removed from their bags they promptly sat on the ground and changed them, leaving the discarded articles

for anyone who might like to appropriate them. The officials were somewhat amazed at this solution of the problem, but they could do nothing to prevent the action, since the boots were the prisoners' private property while he was in the camp. Exchange is no robbery, says the proverb, and in this instance I think the Britishers got the best of the bargain.

Jewelry was also prohibited at a later date. I had purchased a solid silver bag for my wife. It was purchased with hard-earned money, and I valued it highly, more especially as, during my leisure, I had freely engraved it, this handiwork including, among other devices, the inscription of the names of the four prisons in which I had been incarcerated—Wesel, Sennelager, Klingelputz and Ruhleben—together with the respective dates. I was not allowed to take this away from Ruhleben.

The examination completed, and the bags repacked and sealed, the prisoners were dismissed with the curt intimation that they were to parade the following morning at five o'clock at the casino. The prisoners

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were not permitted to carry their baggage back to the barracks. This was placed under guard, and taken to the railway station by a special van. As may be supposed this final examination was followed keenly by the other prisoners. They were alert to gain points. No one knew but that his turn might come the following month, so it was just as well to learn as much concerning the necessary formalities as possible, and to make complete arrangements to satisfy the authorities.

The following morning the camp turned out *en masse* to speed the parting men. The lucky prisoners were lined up and searched, the prisoners who were to be left behind being carefully roped off to prevent smuggling of forbidden communications and articles. This operation was conducted quickly, and the officials, to the amazement of the spectators, appeared to be imbued with a sudden desire to treat the departing men with civility and courtesy, doubtless to create a final good impression. As they were marched off to the station we gave them a rousing farewell cheer. We who were to remain

behind, though heavy in heart, were not to be downed. A precedent had been established, and there was every reason to cherish the hope that we might be numbered among a future fortunate batch.

The journey was not free from tragedy. Before many miles had been covered the train had to be stopped. Once the train had started, and the terrible buildings constituting the internment camp of Ruhleben had slipped from sight, one of the prisoners, overcome by the prospect of soon reaching home, fell a victim to the forces of reaction. His body was removed to be committed to German soil.

Such is the procedure to which exchanged prisoners are submitted before they are allowed to leave Ruhleben.

The establishment of the exchange system was of far-reaching individual concern to myself. For some months I had been hoping against hope that, sooner or later, some such arrangement might be concluded, and accordingly I had laid my own plans to secure freedom.

Many may wonder how, and why, in view

of the so-called perfection of Teuton organization, a prisoner, young and active such as myself, succeeded in getting out of the clutches of the Germans, especially as I had been arrested as a spy in the pay of the British Government, had suffered the agonies of solitary confinement, had been subjected to a rigorous secret trial, was regarded as a dangerous person, and had never been acquitted of the terrible indictment, although I had evaded the great penalty.

On more than one occasion I was tempted to make a bold bid for freedom by taking summary leave of my captors, but quiet reflection convinced me that such a step might prove disastrous, whereas the scheme I was preparing could not possibly fail. Of this I was so certain as to be prepared to put it into operation at the first opportunity. I had completed everything to the uttermost detail, had turned over in my mind every possible contingency and the means to surmount it.

As soon as I learned that the exchange of prisoners was being mooted throughout the camp I lodged an application with the



authorities for inclusion among the favored. It was received with amusement, and I was sorely heckled by the officials for my impudence, but I did not mind, and smiled at their statement that I had been ear-marked for imprisonment until the end of the war. I had already set my project in motion, and everything was running in accordance with my expectations. I badgered the authorities constantly, and observed that the more I did so, the less pronounced became their antagonism to myself. Needless to say I refrained from taking a single person into my confidence.

To the amazement of the camp my name duly appeared upon the notice-board as a prisoner to be exchanged. Highly elated, I outwardly preserved calm and indifference. My comrades could not make it out, and I not being communicative, they discussed the question more heatedly among themselves. But they were thoroughly sporting. They saw that I was playing a deep game, and they wished me every success, though they did not hesitate to express the opinion that I should be tripped up.

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Things proceeded uneventfully. I kept myself discreetly away from my colleagues and restrained myself from even the slightest display of exuberance. The authorities were watching me at every turn, and I knew it. We came to grips for the first time in connection with the signing of passports by the representative from the American Embassy. The German authorities were issuing special passports to returning prisoners, but I had set out from England with an orthodox passport entitling me to proceed to Russia. I still possessed the document, and I expressed my determination to travel under no other. There was a spirited altercation for a few minutes, but at last I got my own way, the authorities compromising by transferring the gist of their special passport to the inner page of the British official passport, and attaching my photograph to the latter in conformation with the regulations.

The train by which I left, started from Spandau, was under military guard, and proceeded direct to the frontier, as usual. The final examination before leaving Spandau

was critical for me. We were all turned out of the train after taking our seats to be counted and recounted, as well as to reply to any question which might be asked. I kept as much as I could in the background, did not invite questioning, spoke to no one, and answered the soldiers in monosyllables.

The railway journey was tedious, and once or twice I was on the verge of breaking down. I was under the constant surveillance of the guard, every movement was closely followed, and a close watch was maintained to discover if I talked to anyone. I was inscrutable as the Sphinx. My colleagues passed the time in spirited conversation, jokes, and joyous narration of what they intended to do when they regained British soil. It was more than my position was worth to join in with them. I was thinking hard, my nerves and wits keyed to concert pitch, while I braced myself for the final encounter at the frontier station, where I knew the closing examination would be searching, and where the slightest inadvertence would bring about my undoing. I was still the "*Englandische*

*Spion*'' to those in charge of the train, and they were very sorry to part with me.

Reaching the frontier the train was stopped. Every man was turned out and forced to parade beside the line, soldiers with fixed bayonets mounting guard. We were counted and recounted to make sure the number of prisoners tallied with the official consignment note, for we were handled like freight. This ordeal proved how utterly impossible it would have been for anyone to have secreted himself upon the train, because it was ransacked from end to end, inside and out, above and beneath.

We stood at attention beside the tracks while the cars were being searched. Names were called and we were ordered to pass through a narrow doorway, only wide enough to admit one person at a time, to submit to another examination and search. I was moving towards the building, when an officer stepped forward and clapped his hand on my shoulder. I turned, and in spite of my self-control, started. It was all up with me. Of that I felt certain, for the man was glowering at me menacingly. He sum-

moned a superior officer, there was a brief harangue between them, and then the latter, turning to me, curtly ordered me to unstrap my baggage. I did so, with apparent good grace, although I was cursing inwardly. The contents of the bag were taken out one by one, shaken, examined inside out and from end to end, even being held up to the light to make sure I had not resorted to some extraordinary subterfuge to carry secret information. As the garments were passed they were dumped on the railway tracks which I was crossing when abruptly held up. Search revealing nothing incriminating, I was gruffly bidden to pick up my traps, and to repack them, the twain standing over and watching me closely meanwhile. Then came further cross-examination and rigid personal search.

Although now I felt confident that I was safe, since there were no further formalities with which to comply, I did not relax my watchfulness. It would have been exceedingly dangerous to have done so since we were still on German soil, though over there, a few yards away, was the German-Dutch

frontier. Freedom was so near and yet so far. As I gazed upon the friendly stretch of Dutch territory, my nerve almost gave way, but I pulled myself together, and there being two hours on our hands before the train left for Holland, turned into the refreshment room. The strain was commencing to tell on me, and I was by no means easier in mind to find that I was still under suspicion, an official mounting watch over me from a pace or two distant.

Kicking my heels in the refreshment room I felt that I could breathe a trifle more freely, for there was nothing to do now but to await the train. I was sitting brooding, when I think I must almost have bumped my head against the ceiling. Two names were bawled out by an officer, and mine was one of them. I nearly collapsed at this unexpected development, and pulling myself together with a great effort, I shuffled off in obedience to the summons. I was submitted to another round of acute interrogation, and there was another examination of my baggage. I thanked my lucky stars that I had not surreptitiously slipped anything

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from my person into the bag after what I thought was the final examination. Had I done so, I should have been tripped up badly. They told me to repack and get into the railway carriage.

At last the train jolted forward once more—but how slowly! It seemed to take as long to cover those few remaining yards to safety as it did to complete the miles between the internment camp and this outpost of the German Empire.

One cannot imagine the sigh of satisfaction which went up as we drew into the Dutch station. The prisoners stretched their chests, to drink freely and fully of the sweet air of freedom. The hospitality of the Dutch almost overwhelmed us. It seemed so strange to be feted and to be pressed with appetizing dainties, after what we had endured for so many months.

A few hours later we swung into the estuary of the Thames, and a cheer went up as we threaded the field dotted with the fighting ships of the Home Country. That glimpse of Britain's Silent Might infused new life into us, and we gave another cheer

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at the hearty welcome we received from the sailors who watched us ploughing Tilburywards. To appreciate the feeling with which I stepped ashore, and once more trod upon the firm soil of free Britain, one must have been in bondage, to have suffered cruelties and privations indescribable. Then, and not until, one is able to form some opinion of what return to the Homeland and all that it signifies, meant to us.

THE END.





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